THE SCIENCE OF THE PARANORMAL

THE TRUTH BEHIND TELEPATHY, ESP, REINCARNATION, AND MORE MYSTERIOUS PHENOMENA

J. M. DEBORD

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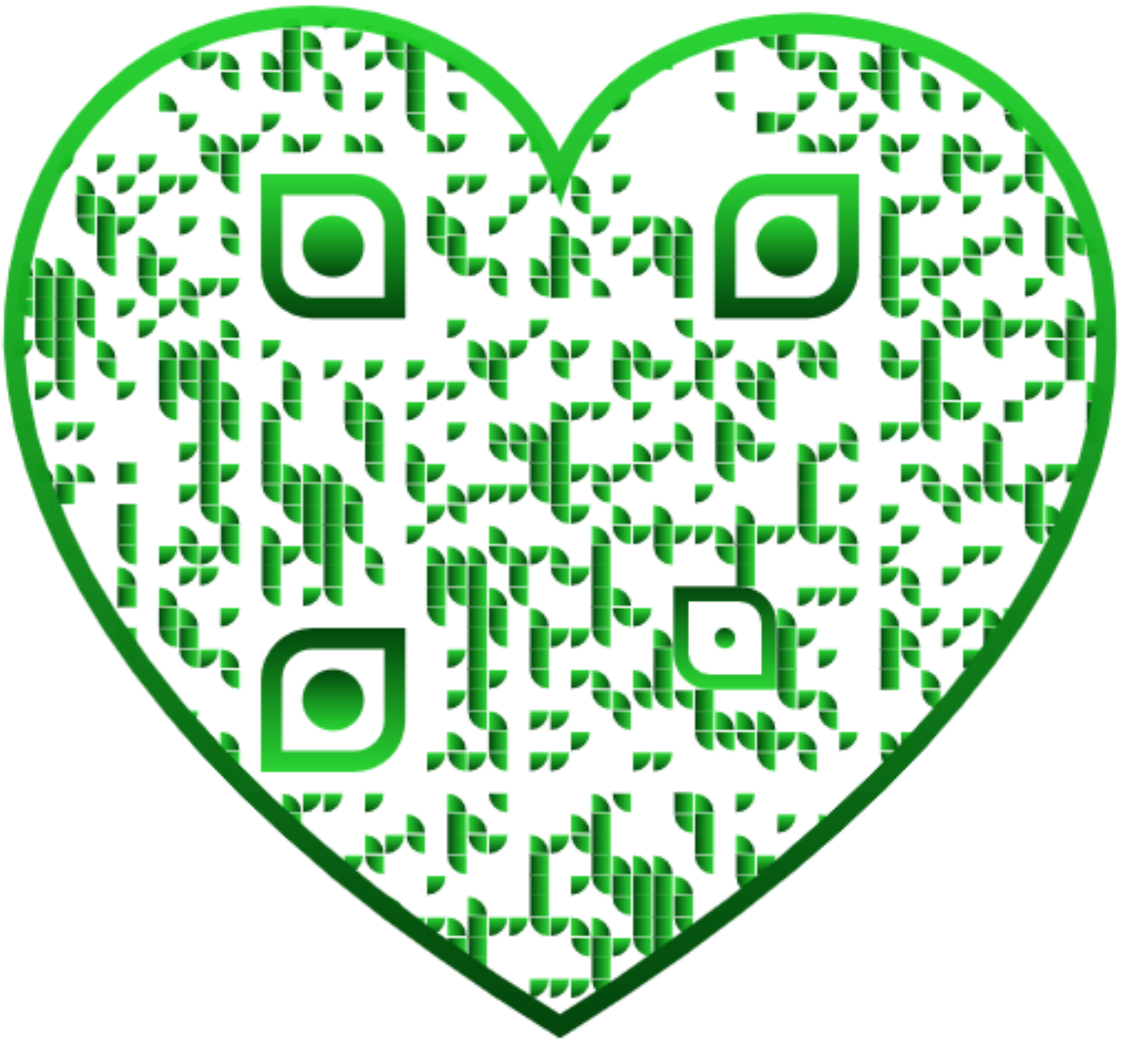
THE DREAM INTERPRETATION DICTIONARY



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INTRODUCTION

Luke Skywalker strides forward to defend the rebel base, one Jedi against an army of mechanized Walkers. Inside the lead machine, Luke's sworn enemy, Kylo Ren, coolly orders, "I want every gun we have to fire on that man."

The lead Walker vaporizes the ground around Skywalker with a laser bolt. Debris flies high into the air. Seconds later, the combined might of all the Walkers pulverizes the spot with high-energy blasts. Clenching his black-gloved fist, Ren demands, "More!" Blast after blast after blast. No one could survive such a barrage.

But as the dust clears, the Jedi emerges unharmed. Not just unharmed but *untouched,* not a single burn on his cloak nor singed hair on his head.

While watching that scene, you may have asked yourself the same question Ren does:

How?

Skywalker isn't really there, that's how. The image of him is a decoy, and light years away, on another planet, he is meditating and projecting the image of himself to distract Ren so the rebel army can escape. The decoy looks just like Luke. It moves and talks and even casts a shadow, and unlike previous *Star Wars* movies, it's not a hologram nor a ghost. Seemingly, he is in two places at once, and moviegoers just assume it's a paranormal ability that comes with being a Jedi Master.

Did you forget the scene where Master Yoda teaches young Luke the power of *bilocation*? No one else remembers it, either, because it never happened. But if you want an answer to how one might be in two places at once, which *Star Wars* fans have been debating ever since *The Last Jedi* came out in 2017, the research into psychic powers offers one possibility, and to locate it you'd need to know the name Alex Tanous, the closest thing to a Jedi to ever live on this planet.

Holder of five college degrees, including a doctorate and three master's degrees,

Dr. Tanous is famous among paranormal investigators for his ability to bilocate. He learned how to project a version of himself that looked and acted just like the original. The ability appeared spontaneously while goofing around as a child. He jumped off some steps, landed, turned around, and saw himself still at the top, in two places at once.

Throughout his life, Dr. Tanous developed that ability and others we call psychic, eventually demonstrating them for researchers from the Society for Psychical Research, a world-class organization for the serious study of the paranormal. In one reported case, while resting between teaching college classes, he dropped into deep meditation, and hundreds of miles away the twin version of himself showed up at the front door of a friend. Alex 2 knocked, came inside, conversed, and even drank a cup of tea, while Alex 1 projected his consciousness to that location like Skywalker does in the movie.

That's what Dr. Tanous claimed, and his friend told investigators it really happened, but did he use the oldest trick in the book by sending a look-alike to pull a fast one on his friend? Or did he hypnotize everyone into believing he possessed psychic powers? Whatever Dr. Tanous did to make people think he could bilocate, it couldn't be *real*, right?

To mainstream science, the answer is of course it's not real. But if we take the word of the people who say it happened, we must accept that our current understanding of science doesn't know how it's possible, it just is. We can then search through scientific theory and concepts to find explanations. Not only is such speculation half the fun, but it also germinates seeds of inspiration and brings what we can imagine into the realm of the possible.

Movies like *Star Wars* are unconstrained by what's scientifically possible or not. In fact, we can thank movies, novels, video games, and other imaginative mediums for stretching the mind to make bold leaps of innovation and discovery. Case in point is the first sci-fi movie in history: *A Trip to the Moon*, circa 1902. Less than seventy years later, Apollo 11 really did make that 239,000-mile journey through space. When President John F. Kennedy gave his "We choose to go to the Moon" speech in 1962, he didn't credit the iconic movie for giving him the idea. By then, NASA engineers and project managers were making those decisions, and their affirmative belief convinced JFK and Congress to devote mass resources for sending

astronauts to the Moon. Seven years later it happened. But it's also easy to picture them all as kids, their imaginations fired up after seeing *A Trip to the Moon*, saying to themselves, "I wonder if it's possible. . ."

Once we know that something is possible, it's just a matter of time until we make it real. That's the nature of innovation. It begins with imagination. It begins with belief. Then science catches up. We'd still be rubbing sticks together to start fires if we believed progress is impossible. The scientific study of the paranormal shows that some of it must be real—there's an outrageous amount of published research saying so—but the belief that *none* of it is real is holding us back.

In a lecture to his students at Laurentian University, neuro-psychologist Michael Persinger, a professor whose research we'll look at later, pointed out that humans observed lightning before developing electricity and watched birds fly before inventing the airplane, then went on to say:

If you can imagine it, it can be done. And that's why: because your brain is [made of] matter. It's based upon the physical principles of the universe. And if you have the capacity to imagine it, it means the potential is there for it to be done.[1]

Other movie inspirations, such as *Star Trek*'s warp drive, are coming to life, at least theoretically. A breakthrough theory in physics shows that propelling a starship through interstellar space by warping the space around it is possible. We're still a long way off from zipping around the galaxy like the *USS Enterprise*, but as Captain Jean-Luc Picard says in Episode 17 of the first season of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*: "Things are only impossible until they are not."

That statement is true, too, for mind powers like bilocation. Say it's impossible, but a good scientist is going to investigate first. At the very least we should keep an open mind. Well-known phenomena like heautoscopy, where medical patients report sensing that they are in two places at once (for instance, one lying on a surgical bed and the other observing the procedure from above) are strangely similar to bilocation. The patients describe it as being in two places at once, and some can recount details such as the surgical tools used and the conversations among the medical personnel. The patients are under anesthesia, supposedly preventing the formation of new memories, so how are they able to remember what happened during the surgery?

Scientists speculate that the hemispheric nature of the brain may have something to do with bilocation. We have two brains, essentially, a right and a left, and it's not a huge stretch to imagine that Dr. Tanous mastered an ability to utilize the two hemispheres independently by identifying a version of himself with each one. But how did that result in creating two physical versions of himself? The second Dr. Tanous showed up at his friend's door hundreds of miles away, interacted with his physical environment, and even drained a cup of tea!

Fortunately, Tanous spoke extensively about his ability to bilocate, and we have other examples of the phenomenon to guide us to answers, answers that will challenge what we think is possible. Psychiatrist Dr. Carl Jung said it's better to know for yourself than to merely believe. Knowing requires proof, and proof requires evidence. The first dictate of science is to go where the evidence leads, and that's what we intend to do in *The Science of the Paranormal*. To dismiss evidence without investigation is better known as "scientism," an ideologically-driven excuse to ignore and discredit. We will follow the evidence and explore the outer limits of what science can tell us about abilities like those demonstrated by Dr. Tanous and other star players in the world of the paranormal. We will look to *Star Wars* and other pop culture sources for depictions of the paranormal. And we will explore the science. Our world is full of mysteries such as bilocation, and we are growing ever closer to understanding them.

So, grab your lightsaber and a tinfoil hat if that's your thing, and let's find out what science has to say about popular claims of the paranormal!

CHAPTER 1

PSYCHOKINESIS: MIND OVER MATTER

Long before Luke Skywalker demonstrated the Jedi power of bilocation, *Star Wars* grabbed the imagination of moviegoers with demonstrations of another power of the mind: psychokinesis, popularly known as mind over matter, and abbreviated as PK. Both Jedi and Sith moved objects with their minds by using The Force. Feats as simple as a novice moving a small rock by willing it to happen led to much bigger demonstrations of power, like when Yoda lifted Luke's submerged X-wing fighter out of the swamp muck in *The Empire Strikes Back*.

The power is not limited to moving objects. Darth Vader famously utilized psychokinesis to crush the windpipe of an Imperial officer who displeased him. Objects fly with the flick of a hand and even entire structures come crashing down through force of will.

Before *Star Wars*, though, came *Carrie*, the movie adaptation of Stephen King's first novel. As a baby, Carrie White levitated her bottle above her crib, and later in the story she exacts revenge against her tormentors by using her mental powers. In more recent times the television series *Stranger Things* gave one of its main characters, Eleven, powers of mind over matter, causing a stir of speculation among science writers over whether such powers really exist in the human repertoire. (Verdict: not likely, but let's dig deeper than they did and see for ourselves.) And Shakuni, a main character in the Sanskrit epic *Mahābhārata*, mentally manipulated the dice in a game, and that story is dated to around 400 BCE, proving that the idea isn't new.

Albert Einstein said God doesn't play dice. But people sure do, so what does science say about this supposed power of the mind? Is there any evidence? Our

search begins with clinical psychologist Dr. Joe Gallenberger. He teaches people how to use psychokinesis to influence games of chance, and he says it starts by getting into the right state of mind: relaxed, heart-centered, and synchronized through the use of binaural beats audio coupled with meditation. (Binaural beats are sound frequencies that synchronize the two hemispheres of the brain to certain wave patterns associated with mental states of creativity, meditation, and concentration, and hemispheric synchronization has been shown to boost performance at psychic tasks, something we'll be sure to review later.) Once "tuned up," a person can then manifest luck, whether it's at a card table, a slot machine, or a dice game like Craps.

Dr. Gallenberger claims that by creating the right mindset, you can have better luck than you would otherwise. It's not like a wave of your hand makes the dice roll exactly what you want every time. Only Jedi can do that, as far as we know. His evidence comes mainly in the form of anecdotes and testimonials—though he does cite studies by prestigious university labs that we'll review later. As far as we know, there aren't any Vegas pit bosses sweating nervously when Joe and his crew of workshop participants hit the casino and grab the dice to test out Joe's methods. Presumably, if there were a proven way of beating the odds through PK as he claims, Vegas would be overrun with people using it to make their fortune.

Anyone who has spent enough time at gaming tables probably has a story about incredible runs of good luck. Just because it may happen after following Joe's tuning protocol is not proof. In fact, some people call that *confirmation bias*, the tendency to interpret new evidence as confirmation of one's existing beliefs or theories. Joe, though, claims that good luck happens at odds greater than chance when people follow his protocol, and *greater than chance* is the benchmark for proving the existence of a phenomenon. In a game like Craps, where careful betting strategies can make the odds as close to even as it gets in a casino, just a few percentage points in your favor can make a big difference in the long run. He's also low-key about making his claims, being mindful of the frenzy it could stir and respectful of the casinos where he holds his workshops. He and his crew play low-stakes games, and the point is to prove that people really do have the power to influence the physical world with their mind.

The point isn't to strike it rich. Nor is it about bending reality to your will, like Darth Vader. It's about living in deeper harmony with the world and the people in it.

And if that means getting rich, more power to you! But if it's the only reason why you want to develop psychokinesis the way Joe teaches it, you are unlikely to get far, because the magic happens when you let go of the outcome and just focus on the process. According to him, a person's intentions trigger a mechanism built into the fabric of material reality that can shape outcomes in a person's favor, and it doesn't operate under the laws of normal physics. It's as elusive as The Force in *Star Wars*, and a good scientist is going to ask, what exactly do you mean by The Force? And please demonstrate it in a way that an outside lab can reproduce under controlled conditions. And let's measure it. Surely, you can do that if you want to be believed.

This is the sticking point in the current debate about PK and other psychic functioning. To get the seal of approval from science, results must be reproducible by any researcher who follows the same experimental protocol that produces an effect. Critics say that hasn't happened, and that the evidence presented by proponents like Joe comes from unsupported claims, flawed studies, and cherry-picked data. But evidence that the mind really can influence matter is out there, and the trail begins in Durham, North Carolina.

The Birth of Parapsychology

The PK experiments conducted at the Duke Parapsychology Lab in Durham kicked off after a gambler showed up there claiming to be able to mentally influence dice. So lab director J. B. Rhine set up experiments with elaborate controls to test the claim, kicking off a new era of scientific research that came to be known as parapsychology, the study of paranormal psychological phenomena. To rule out physical manipulation, mechanical tumblers were employed. Casino-grade dice were brought in. Many experiments were run, and initial results looked promising. Test subjects apparently caused target numbers to come up more often than chance expectation. Rhine's studies produced the statistical significance needed to suggest a psychokinetic effect.

But interestingly, the effect lessened the longer the tests were run. Test subjects apparently got bored or tied their brain up in a knot the longer they focused on the task, Rhine hypothesized. It's known as the *decline effect*, and to Rhine and others it results from the complex psychology involved in psychic functioning. To conventional theorists, it's simply regression to the mean—big ups and downs in the

initial results inevitably flatten out over time. You could flip a coin and come up heads or tails ten times in a row, for example, producing significant odds against chance, but over the course of a thousand flips the numbers return close to fifty-fifty. In the end, the dice rolling experiments didn't budge the needle of scientific consensus against the existence of mind over matter.

And Vegas breathed a big sigh of relief.

Year after year, at casinos around the world, after millions of rolls of the dice, the house take is exactly what's predicted by chance. This may be the ultimate test of PK. People put their money on the line and focus intently, so if ever there were an environment where you'd expect to see PK in action, it's there. Then again, a Craps table can have upwards of twenty people in the game, with various betting strategies that may work against each other. In fact, statistically speaking, the best bet in Craps is to bet against the roller, known as "don't pass" and "don't come" bets and "dark side" betting, and theoretically it would cancel out a PK effect produced by the people betting with the roller.

(As a newbie to Craps, this writer once went on an extraordinary run of luck instigated by a bettor putting down big "don't pass don't come" bets against me. Eighteen winning rolls later, the guy walked away empty-handed, while everyone betting with me hooted and hollered and saw their chip stacks multiply. My attempts at replication failed, though, spoiling my hope of being crowned a Craps god.)

Not So Random

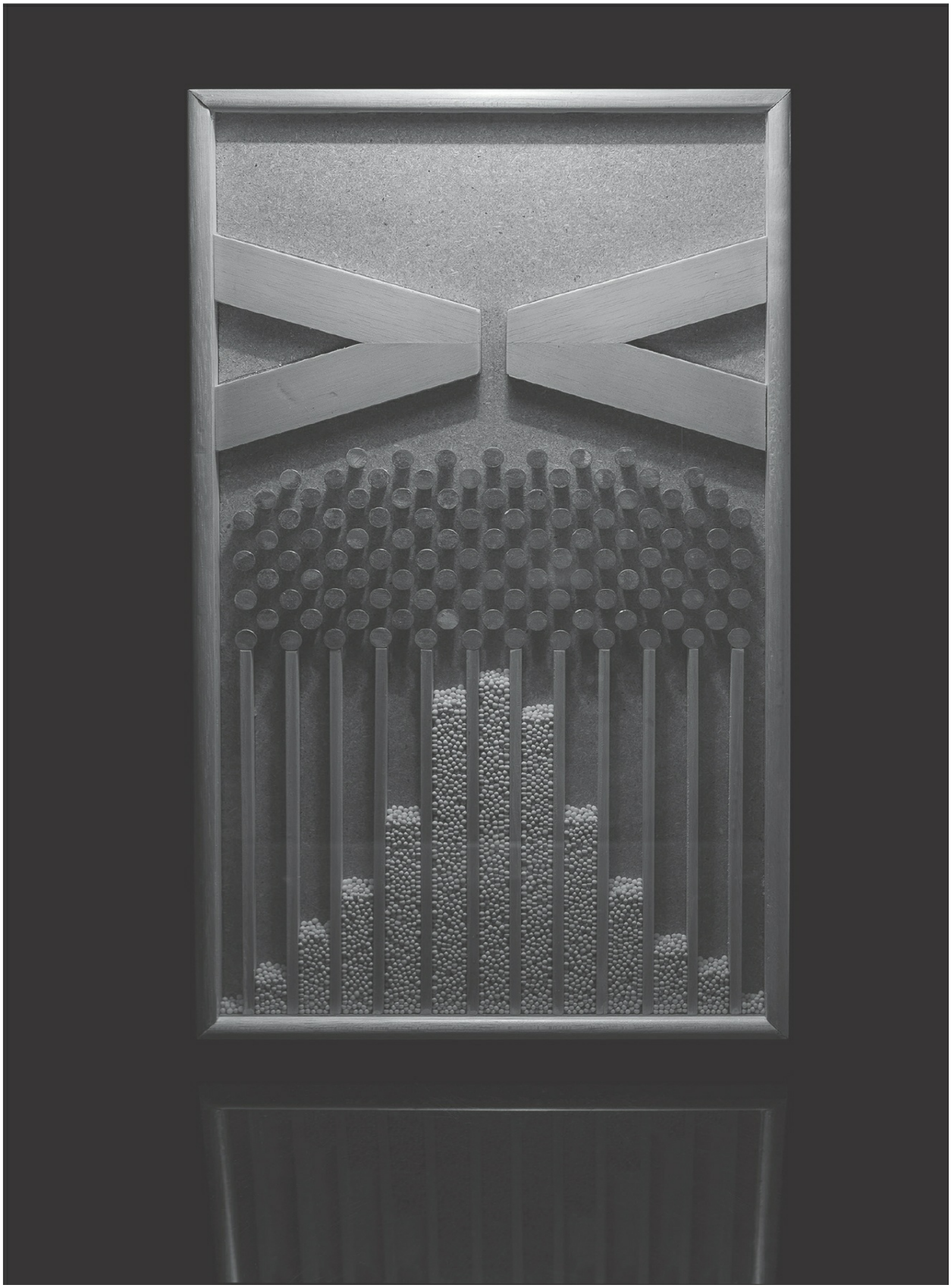
PK experiments moved beyond the dice table to testing whether mental focus could influence a random event generator (REG), an electronic device that generates random numbers. In the 1970s, a Princeton engineering student wrote a senior thesis about whether focused thought could influence supposedly random outcomes. The REG experiment created fifty-fifty odds, essentially a coin flip, and compared outcomes of when a person focused on influencing more heads than tails against trials with no attempts at influence. It produced a small but statistically significant difference, raising the eyebrows of the department dean, Professor Robert Jahn, a luminary in the field of aerospace research.

He desired to know if the mind could influence a machine, and so did his friend, James McDonnell, then the head of the largest aviation company in the world. PK

influence could mean the difference between a fighter pilot coaxing a jet to perform at its best or not, bringing to mind Scotty from *Star Trek* telling Kirk, "I'm giving her all she's got, Captain!" as if the starship were a lover. Some pilots didn't have much luck with their machines, while others coaxed out-of-this-world performances, especially before advanced computers did most of the flying. Was it by chance, or something else? McDonnell wrote a big check to the university to conduct groundbreaking research to find out, giving birth to the Princeton Engineering Anomalous Research (PEAR) lab. It became a playground for the serious study of the strange, though words such as *paranormal* and *psychic* were taboo; PEAR studied "engineering anomalies."

Like baseball players, fighter jocks are a superstitious bunch, with their elaborate preflight rituals and sweet talking of their high-performance jets. If the mind really did have an influence on a machine, even a small one, it could mean the difference between mission success or failure, and life or death. Anthropomorphizing our machines is nothing new. Who hasn't talked to their car, especially when driving conditions are hazardous? In offices around the world, workers can be heard muttering at their computers, copy machines, and other gizmos, sometimes lovingly, sometimes angrily. So many of us have experienced a printer crap out just as it's spitting out an important document, or the Wi-Fi go down at the worst possible moment, that it's created a belief in Murphy's Law that machines are likely to fail right when needed most. Even minor psychokinetic interactions between the mind of a pilot and the sophisticated machines they fly introduces unpredictability. Predictability is the name of the game when zipping along at the speed of sound.

Dean Jahn's interest in PK began as academic. A fellow plasma physicist, Helmut Schmidt, showed a small but significant effect produced during an experiment at guessing a randomly generated number between one and four. Schmidt then designed a more elaborate experiment where test subjects tried to influence one of two lamps to light up. With fifty-fifty odds, one participant scored as high as 58 percent.[2] The experiments toyed with different REGs and conditions. Thousands of trials later, Helmut reported effect sizes a few percentage points above average. It may not seem like much, but the sample size is big enough to say there's an anomaly. Not to be lost in all the data is the fact that certain test subjects preselected for demonstrating PK ability scored quite a bit higher.



On the personal side, Dean Jahn's interest—or maybe *fascination* is a better word—congealed on a fateful day at the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry, while standing alongside colleague Brenda Dunne in front of a Galton box, a peg board that looks like it belongs on the set of *The Price Is Right*. "Plinko" is that game, where contestants earn chips that go *plink, plink, plink* down the board. It's a variation on the idea of the Galton box. Francis Galton, the inventor, wanted to make a point about predictability, the "reversion to mediocrity," by showing that random variables produce orderly distribution in the form of a Bell Curve. But on that day in Chicago, as a group of excitable school kids watched beads go *plink* through the maze of pegs, Jahn and Dunne channeled their inner Puck by trying to mentally influence the beads to land on the right rather than the middle. And Puck beat mediocrity.

Mind over matter? Only one way to find out. Experiment!

Although the effect size of all the REG experiments combined is very small—the equivalent of influencing 1 out of 1,000 coin flips—the huge number of trials produced odds against chance of 1 in 10 billion.[3] A 2003 article from the *New York Times* put the tally at 212 million REG trials and 500 million PK trials overall.[4] When an effect shows up in such a massive data set, it can't be due to chance. They also programmed a robot to change direction randomly, but while test subjects, known as "operators" in PEAR parlance, tried to influence it using their mind. Sometimes, it did not move randomly. They built a supersensitive pendulum and ran experiments to see if operators could influence its swing. They did, slightly. PEAR published research showing that certain individuals could produce strong effects, and interestingly, so could certain emotionally-close couples acting in tandem.

The grandest creation of the PEAR lab is arguably their wall-sized equivalent of the Galton box, with nine thousand polystyrene balls dropped from the top through a matrix of 330 pegs and accumulating in nineteen bins at the bottom. Test subjects were told to influence the distribution either right or left. Despite much concentrated effort and numerous "use The Force" jokes, 85 percent of the time the balls distributed as expected. Mediocrity won. But Galton did not have the last laugh; 15 percent of the time the balls distributed unevenly, in the direction intended, with

odds against chance of 10,000 to 1.[5] According to the math, Jahn's elaborate contraption delivered the goods.

But . . .

But what about replication studies? Other labs produced null results. But they did not replicate the cozy atmosphere at PEAR, an important factor in psi studies. (Psi is the scientific term for the study of paranormal and psychic phenomena.) High-pressure and sterile atmospheres found in some labs seem to stifle operator performance.

But did PEAR run control series? Yes, showing that without attempts at mental influence the results reverted to the mean, but it wasn't enough to satisfy everyone.

Critics claimed there wasn't enough information about the study designs, the test subjects, and the test conditions, though none of those points appear valid—PEAR scientists were meticulous and used constructive criticism to improve their experiments. Some critics argued that simply breaking the known laws of physics nullified the results, all twenty-five years' worth. The editor of a prominent scientific journal said he'd publish one of Jahn's papers if the scientist could transmit it telepathically.

Building upon PEAR's legacy, a most intriguing experiment in a French lab involved a small robot designed to move randomly, and that's what it did during control runs, wandering aimlessly around a room according to output from a REG. But researcher René Peoc'h reached a new height of cleverness by making baby chicks think the robot was their mother, then put the chicks in a transparent cage in the same room with the robot to see if their desire to be close with "Mom" would influence its movement. It worked—the robot's time on the chicks' half of the room increased by 250 percent compared with when the cage was empty. But when chicks not conditioned to think of it as their mother were in the room, the robot moved in its usual random way.

A second experiment tested what would happen when a candle mounted on top of the robot was the only light source in the room. The machine spent more time near the chicks' cage than on the other side of the room, presumably to bring the light source closer.[6] Experiments involving humans "pushing" the robot with their mind also produced effects, but not nearly as significant as what the feathery fluff balls produced.[7]

For a human, the experiment might be a novelty, but for the chicks it was a matter of survival to bring "Mom" closer. Driven by instinct, they didn't rationalize or question whether PK is real, and it may be why their performance in the tests made the humans look downright amateurish. Then again, the psychics, mystics, monks, and paranormal investigators who tried using their mind to influence the machines at PEAR scored no better than the regular operators. It's a surprising finding, considering the experiments with other types of psi phenomena where people with special training (meditation, concentration) perform better. The PEAR studies also found that distance is no barrier to PK, and that women perform better than men on average, but children scored some of the best results.

The scientists at PEAR say the stereotypical image of a person intensely focusing an invisible force at a target, like in the 1981 cult classic *Scanners*, is not what you see happen in their lab. To the contrary, Brenda Dunne, a psychologist who managed the lab for years, said optimal performance correlates with a "flow" state, similar to what athletes and artists experience when their effort feels effortless. Dunne's approach is motherly, encouraging a machine and establishing a bond through feeling. Operators who concentrate intently produce numbers within chance expectation, but paradoxically, when they stop trying their numbers surge.

Jahn told the *New York Times* in 2003:

The exciting thing in the lab is that we are showing physically tangible effects whose primary correlates are subjective. They don't depend on what machine you're using, how fast you're running it or what experiment you're doing. They depend on how you're feeling, how you relate to the experience, what sort of resonance you establish with the task. If you get your mind in resonance with the [REG] processor, it will show a preference for following your desire. And it's not just your computer and other machines that can be affected. When the mind is cooperating with the physical, it creates a step beyond. It is the space in performance that athletes call the zone. It's how great artists paint, how great mathematicians solve equations.[8]

Jahn and Dunne theorize that a flow state works best because the mechanism for PK is unconscious. The effects do not result directly from conscious attention. Instead, it's through resonance between subject and object, between mind and machine, and it doesn't work through the usual channels such as thought processes and physical

senses. The scientists proposed the existence of a quantum substructure connecting mind and matter.[9] In quantum physics it's given names like implicate order and entangled systems, and natural philosophers call it quantum holism and ontic order. To put it simply, everything is interconnected. Mind-matter dualism is an illusion. When the mind interacts with matter, it's actually interacting with an extension of itself because we are all—machines included—essentially One.

Far out, dude! Bill and Ted would love it. But we need look no further than Albert Einstein for heavyweight support, who penned in a letter, translated below from German:

A human being is a part of the whole, called by us "Universe," a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separate from the rest—a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness.[10]

Separateness is an *optical delusion*. Interesting word choice. We look outward and see a world separate from ourselves, but the separateness is not just an illusion, it's a delusion, a belief in something that isn't true, and that argument is being made about the belief that material science understands the fundamental nature of reality. What it understands pretty well is matter, and matter makes up about 5 percent of the universe. We barely know anything about the other 95 percent. Philosopher Bryce Haymond added the following commentary to Einstein's quote:

Our experience of being separate is an illusion of consciousness, just as much as space-time is an illusion of consciousness. But our consciousness itself is ultimately an inseparable "part of the whole" that we call the "Universe" […]. Our brains and bodies, and consequently our minds and consciousness, emerge from out of Nature, from the Universe, while still being absolutely a part of that Nature and Universe. We are not separate from Nature looking out onto Nature, but we ***are*** Nature looking at ***itself***.[11]

Carl Jung used an analogy that may be helpful here. Think of a forest. Each tree is individual but grows from the same soil as the others. The soil in this analogy is the collective nature of the unconscious mind, which Jung called the *collective unconscious*. Each person's individual consciousness grows from the soil of the

collective mind. Reductive thinking would have us believe that we are each an island unto ourselves, separate from the soil from which we grow. But doubt can easily be cast on that idea simply by observing the natural world. That's how science worked before materialism and its concept of dualism took over as the dominant paradigm.

In alchemy, a precursor to modern chemistry, the term for oneness is *unus mundus*, Latin for "one world." Mind and matter are two sides of a unified, primordial whole, a concept that harkens back to Plato and is found throughout Western philosophical and theological thought. Oneness can't be proven through the usual reductive means, and if we lean too heavily on speculative physics we risk entrapment in the sort of New Age mushiness that gets us no closer to truth—we end up at dead ends. But still, we must venture out of our comfort zone if we are to ever understand the paranormal, assuming it exists objectively. The alternative is to simply ignore what doesn't fit our preconceptions, which is how mainstream science deals with the PEAR studies and paranormal phenomena as a whole.

A case in point comes to us from psychologists James Alcock and Arthur Reber in a paper titled "Searching for the impossible: Parapsychology's elusive quest."

Our position is straightforward. Claims made by parapsychologists cannot be true. The effects reported can have no ontological status; the data have no existential value. We examine a variety of reasons for this conclusion based on well-understood scientific principles. In the classic English adynaton, "pigs cannot fly." Hence, data that suggest that they can are necessarily flawed and result from weak methodology or improper data analyses or are Type I errors. So it must be with psi effects. What we find particularly intriguing is that, despite the existential impossibility of psi phenomena and the nearly 150 years of efforts during which there has been, literally, no progress, there are still scientists who continue to embrace the pursuit.[12]

That settles it. Paranormal phenomena simply cannot exist, a big nothingburger, and the study of it is a waste of time—150 years of time. Breathtaking, isn't it? But *every major paradigm shift was a violation of the basic scientific principles of the time.*[13] Geocentrism— the theory that the Earth is the center of the universe—was once a basic scientific principle. For that matter, eugenics was once widely

accepted, too. The argument that paranormal phenomena cannot exist because they're impossible violates the fundamental principle of scientific inquiry that there should be no prior judgment about the truth of an empirical matter.

Researchers like Jahns and Rhine presenting evidence and other researchers flatly refusing to countenance it is a pattern that will become clear as we continue exploring the science of the paranormal. If the dean of engineering at Princeton can't produce research acceptable to the mainstream, then the evidence for PK that we're going to look at next stands even less of a chance. But PK's been documented historically, going back much further than its modern scientific study, and it usually appears "in the wild," under uncontrolled conditions, and without scientists on hand to question every minute detail. Skeptics like Alcock and Reber reason that the just as pigs cannot fly, any evidence in support of PK and other psi phenomena must be bunk. But is that true?

The Flying Friar

It's not to say that we should waste time arguing that pigs can fly—some claims can be refuted without needing to go through elaborate testing and experimentation (I'm looking at you, flat earthers)—but there are well-documented cases of PK involving levitation. The most famous of which is Franciscan friar Joseph of Cupertino. Saint Joseph, the patron saint of pilots and fliers, levitated in front of *thousands* of witnesses, including a pope and many cardinals and bishops. He did it multiple times in multiple places and not once did anyone find hidden wires or any sort of trickery. His enemies tried everything to discredit him, to hide him away, to prosecute him, but they never denied the fact of his miraculous flights, some of which are reported to have carried him as high as thirty meters and lasted as long as an hour.[14]

These days, someone like Joseph would be a sensation, a sure bet to win *America's Got Talent*. Casinos on the Vegas Strip would shower him with money to perform for their audiences—and stay away from their Craps tables! But back then, during the 1600s, Joseph was a *problem*, and if not for powerful people intervening who personally witnessed and sometimes benefited from his powers of healing, precognition, and levitation, the problem would have been solved with some rope and enough wood to stoke a nice big fire.

The evidence includes trials before the Italian Inquisition where witnesses recounted the many times Joseph was seen floating off the ground in religious ecstasy. Dutifully recorded testimony from Church officials and clergy of all kinds, plus nobles, doctors, and dignitaries, paints a picture of events that actually happened. They swore under oath, and the penalty for lying would most certainly be severe and put their immortal souls in danger of hellfire. Very likely, the hundreds of witnesses on record were telling the truth as they saw it. It's not to say it was absolutely real—maybe they hallucinated or saw optical illusions. But levitation wasn't the only paranormal thing that happened. Joseph was also known to utter prophecies. Twice during his lifetime he was heard to say that a pope had died, then the monastery where he was staying would receive the news. None of it was disputed as authentic—the Inquisitors were tasked with determining whether it was demonic.

But no, at his first trial Joseph's extreme humility convinced the judges that this country priest had not a bad bone in his body. A clumsy simpleton, yes, and at times excessively pious and evasive about what happened when he levitated (he claimed to be in trance and rarely remembered much about it), but not a con man. It may have helped his case that, in spite of himself, he levitated in front of them and many other witnesses while saying Mass in Rome, and during his trial he expressed embarrassment about it.

Ludovico Mazzanti (1686-1775)

More attention was the last thing he wanted, for by then his legend had spread and his presence in public caused spectacles, leading some critics to argue that unethical

people around Joseph were using his legend for their gain. The problem with that theory is, he never accepted even one cent from those he helped. Joseph, by all accounts, just wanted to be left alone to pray and meditate and practice extreme forms of spiritual asceticism, such as by fasting for forty days straight, which he did multiple times, sometimes in the same year.

Canonization of a saint by the Catholic Church is a long affair, and contrary to popular opinion, it's as thorough and *evidence-based* as the most tedious trial. The process lasts months, and the Church tasks high officials to gather evidence and others to act as prosecutors and defenders. They depose witnesses, hear sworn testimony, and rigorously scrutinize it all. Scholars who reviewed the enormous volume of records in the Vatican archives confirmed seventy reported instances of levitation that occurred during a sixteen-year period of Joseph's life while he lived at Assisi, with 150 witness depositions.[15] These instances are considered the best evidence among reports that may number in the thousands. In the end, though, Joseph wasn't canonized as a saint because he could fly, it was because of the miracles that occurred *after* his death in 1663.

Many other saints are said to levitate, bilocate, prophesize, read minds, and the like. Without a doubt, there are people who *want* us to believe. There are cults that *need* us to believe. But in Saint Joseph's case, fact is separated from fiction through the same trial processes used in courts around the world to determine truthfulness and establish the facts. Canonization far exceeds the burden of proof, proving not just beyond a reasonable doubt but beyond any doubt as far as the Church is concerned.

But if some saints really can fly, where is the conclusive video evidence of it happening in modern day? The videos of yogis supposedly levitating are unconvincing. Science author Dean Radin actually traveled to India to witness the performances and all he saw were physical feats of bouncing off the ground from a seated position.[16] It's a far cry from what Joseph reportedly did.

And we ask, if it really did happen, then how? According to Joseph's testimony and others who bore witness, he didn't intend his levitations; his religious ecstasy triggered it. Plus, his early life created unique psychological conditions, to say the least. Forced to flee debt collectors, his father went into hiding, and his moralistic mother's harsh treatment made Josepth loathe himself. Then, at nine years old, he

developed a growth on his backside that ballooned to melon-size and crippled him for five years. Desperate for a cure, his mother employed the services of a hermit surgeon who cut out the foul-smelling mass and cauterized the wound, then applied oil from a lamp that had burned before an image of Mother Mary.

Presto. The boy went from screaming in agony to healed, and for the rest of his life he showed loving devotion to Our Lady of Grace.

Joseph then went off the deep end. He prayed ceaselessly and walked around in a trance. Clumsy from his bedridden years, he referred to his body as "the jackass," which bore the burden of carrying his pristine soul step by step through the muck of physical life. And he treated it as such, whipping himself and wrapping his body in painful contraptions. Bruised and bloody and seemingly oblivious to all pain and physical suffering but at the same time keenly empathetic to the suffering of others, he'd see something that triggered his religious ecstasy, often during Mass, and up, up, and away he went. When we say levitation, it's wrong to picture Magneto from X-Men coolly floating over the chaos of a battlefield. Joseph's body became rigid and jerky and his eyes went completely blank. He was escaping.

But could the man really fly? We weren't there to see for ourselves, but the evidence is there, and if true, the best theory for how he did it is rooted in the Catholic Mass. During the ritual, bread and wine become the body of Christ—transubstantiation. As a priest, Joseph enacted the ritual, and it enraptured him. He spent hours on end entranced by reciting the prayers and *magical rites*, and that's when many of the reported instances of levitation occurred.

Magic is antithetical to science, but magical effects may exist, similar to the placebo effect, the ultimate demonstration of mind over matter. Believing something strongly makes it real. Take a sugar pill believing that it's a magic cure and whatever illness or condition or disease you were suffering from is gone. The medical literature is full of well-documented cases. Joseph believed whole-heartedly that when he said the prayers and incantations of Mass, the bread and wine really became the body of Christ. Then he took the magical potion into himself, and away he went.

So we start with the man's absolute belief in a magical ritual, then add his training in enacting it and his daily practice of it, and view it all in light of his burning desire to become spirit and join with God. His body, believing what his

mind was telling it, responded by becoming *insubstantial*—spirit. Weightless. No longer bound by gravity.

Unlike mind over matter, Joseph's case is more like mind *leaving* matter. It's hard to imagine more wretched conditions than his during his developmental years, in rural Italy as witch hunts raged and the Plague devastated town after town. He found no comfort at home, emotionally or physically, and as a young man he found no place in the world—every occupation he tried prior to the priesthood ended up in failure and often humiliation. A commonality in the biographies of saints, mystics, healers, and others who are said to work miracles is that they experience severe childhood illnesses. Their mind retreats from the physical world into their internal experiences. They often grow up in poverty and environments where miracles aren't just believed but may be necessary for survival. They flee the material world, and in the deep exploration of the inner world, compelled by forces that drive some people mad, they find their calling.

At this point it looks impossible to explain a case like this in any way scientifically, and levitation is the hardest to explain of all the phenomena we're going to look at. We bring it up now because while our science says it's absolutely not real, some very credible people say otherwise. Could they actually be right? Skeptics argue that if people really could perform miracles like the saints of old were said to do, why aren't we seeing miracles performed today as cameras record from all angles and stage magicians trained in the methods of science carefully observe? Presumably, science scared the charlatans back into the shadows to play their tricks on gullible rubes, and the so-called miracles never happened. On the other hand, considering Saint Joseph's treatment by not only a star-struck public but also the hostile authorities in the Church, who would seek that kind of attention? Well, there is one man who craved such attention and wanted the validation, and he's definitely not a saint. They call him the PK Man.

He's No Saint

Ted Owens grew up in the US during the time between the World Wars, with a genius IQ and a volcanic temper, too—a temper that developed as he met with ridicule for trying to convince people of his powers, and is said to have roots in his father's cruel treatment of him before he moved in with his grandparents as a young

boy. His grandfather is reputed to have been a dowser and his great grandmother a psychic reader. Young Ted learned how to hypnotize himself and memorize entire magazines, according to a psychologist who studied him for ten years, Dr. Jeffrey Mishlove, the host of the long-running TV program *Thinking Allowed*.[17] Owens was a member of Mensa, so his IQ must have tested in the top 2 percent of the country. A certified genius.

Owens worked at the Duke Parapsychology Lab as a clerical assistant during the 1940s, after he sought the help of the most famous ESP researcher of the time, Dr. J. B. Rhine. Owens first came to public attention for his claims of being able to control the weather. It didn't go over well, but the mockery seemed to make him more determined—and angrier. After leaving Duke, he worked in a variety of interesting occupations, including bullwhip artist and knife thrower, which, he claimed, helped his mental flexibility, but his claim of being in communication with "space intelligences" who chose him as a PK prophet can never be verified.

Owens began keeping records of his feats and gathering sworn statements from witnesses. One is from Philadelphia attorney Sidney Margulies, who in 1967 signed an affidavit attesting that a lightning bolt struck when and where Ted, a typist in Sidney's law office, predicted it would happen.[18] Margulies told a researcher years later that there'd been no lightning visible in the sky until the moment Ted called it down. On a separate occasion, two men witnessed four lightning strikes happen where Ted pointed to, and they swore to it.

Eat your heart out, Thor!

Owens also claimed to direct a hurricane at the state of Florida, once telling a reporter for the *National Enquirer* it was in retribution for refusing to run a story about him. Then, Hurricane David, a Category 5 titan, threatened to strike Miami. The reporter appealed to Owens to make the storm go elsewhere, citing the massive loss of life, and Owens agreed. Hurricane David clobbered the Dominican Republic, instead.

In 1967, he told his landlord that an earthquake would strike the US west coast and it happened the following day.[19]

Before news of Watergate broke, Owens predicted that the president would resign or be forced out of office.

He predicted an attack on US forces in Vietnam, power blackouts, freak storms,

UFO sightings, plane crashes, and the 1986 space shuttle Challenger disaster. They all came to pass, and while Owens's record was far from perfect, he did say he would sabotage the Chicago Bears 1975 football season. The Bears went 4-10, a bad season for sure, but no surprise there—it was the same record as their previous season.

These reports stretch credibility to the max and wouldn't be worth mentioning if not for the long list of credible witnesses and researchers who communicated with Owens and tracked the PK feats he claimed responsibility for. There are journalists, radio broadcasters, sports reporters, psychologists, police officials, and even J. Allen Hynick, science advisor for Project Blue Book. The predictions were confirmed to have been made before the events.

Then there's Dr. Mishlove's involvement, a parapsychologist with a fifty-year track record. He said the news is full of reports about disasters, and taken by itself a prediction that something bad is about to happen is nothing special, but he also claimed to verify more than 160 of Ted's predictions. Owens said in most cases he caused the disasters with the help of his space friends, and he justified the subsequent misery and death as part of some cockeyed higher plan to use him as an experimental subject to test how much power one human could handle.

Once, when Mishlove angered Owens by pointing out that one of his predictions didn't come true, Ted hung up the phone and a moment later Mishlove suddenly felt very ill. Owens then called back, apologizing, and saying it would never happen again, and the ill feeling soon passed. Mishlove suspects that Ted lost his temper and attempted to dish out punishment on the unbeliever, something he reportedly succeeded at many times.

After a decade of studying him, the psychologist concluded that Owens really did have PK power—there were far too many wildly unlikely coincidences for them all to have been random.

But Owens tried to help, too, and on several occasions he claimed to intervene in cases of severe drought. It happened in London, the Bay area of Northern California, and Florida. He said he'd end the drought, and in each case the rain soon returned in style, sometimes causing flooding.

It's easy to call bullshit on the Owens affair, but before knee-jerking a loud "get outta here" reaction that shuts down discussion, let's consider that the case fits a

pattern in history of something messing with humanity from behind the scenes. From the stories out of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia about gods walking the Earth, to the Christian, Islamic, and Hindu tales of divine intervention believed by billions of people, to the modern phenomenon of UFO lore where alien intelligences blow our minds with displays of awesome power. Scholars like Jacques Vallée and Jason Jorjani say the evidence is ample that a mysterious force is purposefully engaging with humanity. Carl Jung hypothesized that split-off aspects of one's consciousness or psyche may manifest as paranormal phenomena, specifically as UFOs.[20] We can't accept that such power is actually within us, so we project it onto godlike figures, including extraterrestrials.

Vallée makes a similar argument in his book *The Invisible College*, saying, "I believe that a powerful force has influenced the human race in the past and is again influencing it now. Does this force represent alien intervention, or does it originate entirely within human consciousness?"[21]

Donrpd

We find in Owens a trickster character obscured behind supposed feats of godlike power reminiscent of Hermes, and to Jorjani it makes Owens a modern manifestation of an ancient mercurial spirit waging psychological warfare. Its nonsensicalness deflects away the attention of scientists and authorities, leaving it to

engage with the less-educated, less-reasoning masses and stir up social movements that bring down empires. Like when Roman illiterati dismissed early Christians as a bunch of freaks, but what was thought of at the time as nonsense—*sure, a miracle worker (Jesus) who healed the sick, cast out demons, and rose from the grave*—later became the backbone of the Holy Roman Empire.

The same can be said of what happened during the seventh century on the Arabian Peninsula when an otherworldly intelligence engaged repeatedly with the Prophet Muhammad, and Islam emerged from the fringes. *Haha* said the sophisticated urbanites, *look at the freaks and hairies!* But they didn't laugh long, did they? Owens felt much the same way, ridiculed for what he thought—he would say *knew*—to be true. Keep in mind, Owens mastered arcane skills and demonstrated high intelligence. He wasn't an idiot but sure was treated that way even after repeated public demonstrations.

To the scholar Jorjani, ignoring these phenomena only invites trouble. The mysterious force is trying to get our attention and bring about a reckoning, which follows the thinking behind Jung's concept of Shadow, the split-off and repressed aspects of the psyche that become increasingly dangerous and pathological the longer they are ignored. The same argument can be made about the Nazis and the Taliban—shadowy social movements originating with mysterious forces that put the tools in the hands of zealots to take over their societies.

And it's going to keep happening, presumably, until we reckon with this mercurial spirit!

We can readily acknowledge the fraud and trickery and delusion riddled throughout the history of PK reports, yet separate the wheat from the chaff and consider cases like the PK Man and St. Joseph together with evidence reported by others. These cases and the myriad incidents associated with them are all in a class where we say, "There must be a good explanation," but good luck finding it. And yet the numbers of people who swear it all happened are way too numerous to wave off, and the people doing the swearing are anything but fringe. Like in a case reported by Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung. In 1909, while visiting Sigmund Freud in Vienna, Jung asked him what he thought of psychic phenomena. Freud dismissed it, lecturing about the nonsense of it all (though later in life he changed his mind). Then, says Jung:

While Freud was going on in this way, I had a curious sensation. It was as if my diaphragm was made of iron and becoming red-hot—a glowing vault. And at that moment there was such a loud report in the bookcase, which stood right next to us, that we both started up in alarm, fearing the thing was going to topple over us. I said to Freud: "There, that is an example of a so-called catalytic exteriorisation phenomenon."

"Oh come," he explained. "That is sheer bosh."

"It is not," I replied. "You are mistaken, Herr Professor. And to prove my point I now predict that in a moment there will be another loud report!" Sure enough, no sooner had I said the words than the same detonation went off in the bookcase.

To this day I do not know what gave me this certainty. But I knew beyond a doubt that the report would come again. Freud only stared aghast at me. I do not know what was in his mind, or what his look meant. In any case, this incident aroused his mistrust of me, and I had the feeling that I had done something against him. I never afterwards discussed the incident with him.[22]

The powerful emotions Jung experienced leading up to the PK event are common to these cases. St. Joseph experienced religious ecstasy before levitating. Owens experienced anger before calling down a terrible storm. Emotions are a fuel for paranormal experiences, whether for PK or poltergeists. It's as if something inside the person will not be contained any longer, and the pressure releases with a bang.

Another sort of pressure may also be at play here: the pressure of suppression by society and repression by individuals who want to fit in, forcing anything that seems "abnormal" underground. It's what gives rise to the Trickster, an archetypal character that appears in cultural mythologies worldwide. It won't be put under the proverbial microscope, yet, like Ted Owens, it seems to be practically begging for our attention. We would be wise to give it, because even if the paranormal explanations are someday proven to be incorrect, our inquiry and rational engagement are likely to make strides toward not only greater understanding of fascinating phenomena, but also integration of aspects of the human psyche that seem to have no choice but to hide and obfuscate. The Trickster, according to Jung, is actually seeking reintegration because normal society banished it out of fear and the struggle for power—by nature, the Trickster challenges power structures,

especially the dogmatic and authoritarian kind. The only place where it's welcome is at the margins of society.

Now you see it, now you don't; the Trickster is a lot like other paranormal phenomena in that way. It won't be pinned down, dissected, analyzed, and explained away. Most importantly for the science of the paranormal, these phenomena are elusive and anything but predictable, and that's a problem we must reckon with. Another problem is they seem to respond to the beliefs of the people present, a fact that shows up repeatedly in the research. Science isn't comfortable with beliefs, but as you'll see, belief has a way of creating its own reality. Therefore, the science of the paranormal would be incomplete without accounting for this belief, so that's where we go next.

Power of Belief

As strange as it sounds, psychologist Stanley Krippner claimed to have witnessed Shoshone medicine man Rolling Thunder control the weather. The sky could be clear blue and suddenly storm clouds would appear at his command, or go away if he wished it. Judging by his name, he was big into storms, but he also performed demonstrations of healing and telepathy that were witnessed and reported by Krippner, a pioneer in the study of the paranormal who will be a focus of our attention in the chapter on premonitions and dreams. Weather control is, of course, an old legend with a cottage industry behind it and a long list of people, including Ted Owens, who not only claim that ability but also put on convincing public demonstrations. In places like Colombia and Indonesia, paying a "rain shaman" to keep the ground dry before a soccer match or outdoor wedding is just the cost of doing business, and business is good as long as people keep believing.

Shamans work through belief and are not averse to using trickery to trigger its reality-shaping power. Make people believe something and it has a remarkable way of becoming real, for individuals and groups and even animals. We need only remember the baby chicks who thought a robot was Mom. Krippner said he witnessed a ceremony where Rolling Thunder ended an elaborate ritual by sucking the poison of alcoholism out of a man and spitting out a mouthful of reddish-brown fluid—almost certain to be tobacco juice. The psychologist followed up two years later and found the man to still be on the sobriety wagon. Whatever works, right?

Belief in something has a way of being reality, and while science discounts belief for the most part, there's research suggesting it's a power or force that reaches further than most people think is possible. Take the case of Philip, a fictional character invented by a group of parapsychological researchers in Toronto, including a geneticist, a psychologist, an engineer, and a chairperson of Mensa in Canada—scientifically-minded people. As an experiment, they made up a story about Philip's life then held seances to contact him and experienced nothing during the initial sessions. Then the group adopted a protocol developed by Kenneth Batcheldor and other parapsychologists, making the atmosphere light and fun, joking and carrying on, and the floodgates opened.

Outrageous paranormal phenomena began happening, including full table levitation, loud rapping sounds, and flickering lights, loosely inspiring the movies *The Apparition* and *The Quiet Ones*. Almost unbelievably, the experiments were replicated with different fictional characters invented by different research groups and produced similar paranormal events, documented on video and audio, including by a film crew from a local television station while witnessed by a live studio audience. It's all backed by personal testimonies from witnesses with strong credentials. Dozens of sessions produced evidence that can be disputed—what can't be disputed when it comes to the paranormal?—but if taken at face value, the original Toronto group seems to have confirmed their thesis that PK phenomena could be produced without the presence of a medium and under fully lighted conditions. A key group member, Dr. Joel Whitton, a psychologist, hypothesized that the group triggered the phenomena by adopting a childlike attitude of believing anything is possible.

But a more conventional explanation claims the effects like table movement were produced by ideomotor action—small, unconscious muscular contractions. Scientific tests by Michael Faraday, James Braid, and Ray Hyman proved that ideomotor actions can make the planchette of a Ouija board and the swing of a pendulum move in ways that are consistent with expectations and unconscious desires. But does it account for the large movements of the seance table like those reported by the Philip experiment? Or that a researcher sitting on top of a table was tossed from it? Or that recordings of the table rapping displayed a different acoustic signature than raps created mechanically, that lights flickered on demand instead of

randomly without the controls being touched, and that candy left on the table as an enticement for Philip didn't move when the table levitated and slanted at a 45-degree angle?

Absolutely, we must bring theories like ideomotor action "to the table" when investigating the causes of seemingly paranormal phenomena, but we must also be conscientious of using them dismissively, bearing in mind the observation that belief is a spark that can turn into an inferno. For instance, some participants in the Philip experiment started experiencing dramatic PK phenomena in their homes. So did researchers who studied the paranormal events at Skinwalker Ranch in Utah. It's all fun and games until the poltergeists show up!

Kenneth Batcheldor, a clinical psychologist who investigated many cases of table levitation and related phenomena, says:

. . . a deliberately adopted attitude of belief, if such a thing is possible, appeared to be ineffective. It was no use sitting down and thinking, "I believe this table can levitate." An adept or yogi might achieve success after long training in meditation, but for the average person, something evidently must happen to create belief.

This raises the question of how the first PK event in a group ever comes about. If success is required to create the necessary quality of belief that gives rise to further success, how can success occur in the first place? The answer I came up with was that the first event is probably a false event, but one that is mistaken for a real PK event.

The "false event" would be ideomotor action in most cases. After noting how naturally occurring artifacts can be mistaken for real events and create the necessary belief state for success, Kenneth goes on to say:

Quite early in the series of sittings [a sitting is a session with a medium or channeler], I noticed that ostensibly paranormal events "grew" as it were, out of these normal events. For example, creaks that at first seemed to me to be due to thermal expansion or to stresses in the wood of the table gradually became far too loud and frequent to depend on either of these causes. Small movements of the table that were probably due to involuntary muscular action gave way to larger movements, and eventually to movements that could no longer be attributed to

accidental muscular action—unless fraudulent of course—namely, levitations of a good height and movements without hand contact.[23]

In the sci-fil novel *The Man in the High Castle*, author Philip K. Dick uses the power of belief as the premise for a story about changing history. In the novel, the Axis powers won WWII, not the Allies, and America is occupied by the Nazis and Imperial Japan. Film clips showing that the Allies actually won circulate underground, creating hope, and breeding resistance against the occupation. The films created a new narrative and belief, changing history. If belief can create its own facts like that, and like the belief that controlling the weather actually makes the rain fall, does it not create an overlap where science can investigate when evidence like the Philip case pops up? It might be too much to ask because science is really good at understanding things in isolation, but psychokinetic force and the reality-shaping power of belief involve macro systems that are already complex enough to deal with. Most subjects we explore in our investigation of the science of the paranormal are going to lead to this same lack of conclusive proof, but let's keep in mind that proof is not the job of a researcher. Gathering and presenting data is, and so far we've found plenty of it. And there's plenty to go.

Making the Connection

PK appears to work through the interaction of the mind with the environment, but proving it is a hard sell, and an even harder sell is the idea that the mechanism for the interaction is summed up as "oneness." A medicine man like Rolling Thunder shows people how to live harmoniously with their environment, to be "at one" with it. Harking back to the PEAR experiments, you could say that harmony creates resonance between people and the environment or a machine. Break down that wall and now everything in the world is an extension of oneself, and, vice-versa, oneself is an extension of everything.

Whether objectively true or not, it's the mindset known to activate PK and other psychic functioning such as telepathy, and it's not due to signals being sent or received by the brain; they are the mind or consciousness interacting and resonating with the environment and other people as if they are all "one." When you "send" a telepathic signal to a "receiver," you are actually connecting with the part of the

receiver that's actually part of you. For PK, it means that the object, machine, or system manipulated by the mind is also a part of oneself, and the interaction is also within oneself. That's a leading theory among the researchers trying to explain the evidence.

Clinical psychologist James Carpenter, a former president of the board of the Rhine Research Center, says it's a fact that "we are all unconsciously and perpetually engaged in a universe of meaning that extends far beyond our physical boundaries in space and time," and psi functioning is going on all the time. It's a mistake, in fact, to say that PK is an action. Instead, PK is the first step of the mind to actualize its intentions.[24] Carpenter makes the argument that psi is not an ability or power, it's a preconscious interaction between mind and object.

When you think about reaching for a cup to drink from it, the mind starts interacting with the object before the hand reaches out. When everything proceeds as expected, PK stays out of sight. You grab the cup, take a drink, put it down. But the cup may slide out of your grasp if something unconsciously affects the process, perhaps as a meaningful expression of the idea that you're not "grasping" something such as your own motives or those of someone close to you. It's in the back of your mind and next thing you know you're cleaning up spilled coffee but don't remember actually touching the cup.

When a shaman sees storm clouds gathering and thinks great, *the ground is thirsty and could use a drink*, not just their mind but their entire body down to the cellular or even atomic level is interacting with the clouds, the theory goes. Nothing more is required for the intention to then manifest. The distribution of probability is affected to make the clouds release their rain when and where desired, provided there's not a counter intention at play, like from the people next door hoping to stay dry until the conclusion of their BBQ, or the kids who don't want to be cooped up indoors. And there's no need to be a shaman or a psychic or a Ted Owens; the effort (at psychokinetically affecting the environment) is effortless and for the most part unconscious. And most importantly, it's natural, happening all the time, and is usually unnoticeable. The big displays of PK are the exception, not the rule.

The experiments like those at the Rhine Lab and at PEAR tested PK through sheer volume but didn't change the mind of mainstream science. Then we looked at individual cases of spectacular effects that if taken at face value affirm the reality of

PK. However, more is needed when trying to prove something for which a consensus exists against it, rightly or wrongly. The power of belief against psychic and paranormal phenomena may actually be hindering the apprehension of a true reality that uses our belief to deflect away our attention. There may even be blinders on our eyes to prevent us from accessing PK powers that can (if some reports are to be believed) literally make planes fall from the sky. Powers that appear to be tied closely with a person's emotional state.

We can say for sure that most people do not possess the level of emotional intelligence for them to be trusted with the ability to affect the environment on a large scale, an argument made by Mishlove for keeping knowledge of PK obscured behind disbelief. Professor of philosophy Stephen Braude says:

Perhaps, at a deeper level, both the fraud and the mistrust which it justifiably produces are part of an underlying protective mechanism developed within the *collective unconscious* (to use a Jungian term) of humanity. For, given our present level of ethical development, what awesome horrors might we wreak upon ourselves if we were able to harness psychokinesis in a disciplined manner? There are reasons to think that, if psychokinesis is real, it is a Pandora's box that is best left unopened by humankind—even if the price for this is our ignorance.[25]

Professor Braude says his skepticism about the claims of PK melted away in the face of his undeniable personal experiences and the cases he personally investigated. Let's look at that evidence, plus more collected by reputable researchers.

1. Ariel Farias is a family man, a martial arts instructor, and just happens to be able to lift tables by putting his hands palms flat against the top surface and intending it to happen. You might even find videos on YouTube of him demonstrating PK. The Farias videos, recorded from multiple angles and in high-definition, are hard to knock down as illegitimate, especially considering the multitude of researchers in the room as the demonstrations took place and the stringent testing conditions. Following the sudden death of his father when Farias was a child, he started experiencing objects moving mysteriously on their own. He eventually came to realize it wasn't a ghost or poltergeist, it was his own doing, which is said by researchers to be an important step for responsibly

directing PK energy or whatever it is. As up to five cameras recorded and sensors monitored weight fluctuations, Farias put his hands lightly atop a table and made the legs lift off the ground. He produced the effect on seventeen out of twenty-three trials, sometimes using only one hand. Researchers employed every conceivable means of verifying that it wasn't a trick, and tested for themselves if they could do it through muscular force and were unable.[26]

2. Nina Kulagina moved objects without touching them. During some of the trials the objects were kept under a glass dome. Some were made of metal, some of wood or cardboard. On video, she seemingly causes the needle of a compass to spin in complete circles and stops a pendulum from swinging. Researchers present during the demonstrations said she could make people feel like their skin was hot or burning even though thermometers registered no temperature changes. Her heart drummed as high as 240 beats per minute, which should have sent a woman her age into cardiac arrest, and after the sessions she was found to have lost more than four pounds.[27] Sometimes the effects could be produced quickly, and sometimes it took hours, but once she got going the fireworks were spectacular. Scientists measured the front of her brain as it produced electrical characteristics fifty times stronger than the back, while the gradient for the average person is four to one. While in that highly charged state, electrostatic and electromagnetic fields were detected coming from her body up to twelve feet away. She appeared to be able to direct the force field waves at a specific area.
3. At the Metapsychic Institute in Paris are plaster casts taken from paraffin molds of hands that materialized out of thin air in the presence of Nobel laureate physiologist Charles Richet and physician Gustav Geley during a seance. The materialization happened as they held the medium's hands and took other steps to detect trickery. Richet, while acknowledging the absurdity, swears the materializations really happened and it wasn't fraud. Along with Frederick Myers, Sir Oliver Lodge and others, he witnessed PK and ectoplasmic manifestations produced by medium Eusapia Palladino. The researchers reported that while holding her arms and feet, Richet felt a hand touch his head then move to cover his mouth, and when he spoke his voice sounded muffled. The big table around which the seance was held moved on its own and at one

point jerked violently. A small cigar box materialized and fell out of the air. An electrical wire then wrapped around the heads of Richet and the medium and pulled tight, all on its own. An accordion started playing as the medium mimed the keystrokes with her fingers. A lamp shade flew across the room, and mysterious writing appeared on the body of Richet beneath his clothing. It all occurred while on his private island, in his home, and under his controlled conditions.

4. In the documentary *Ring of Fire*, filmmakers Lawrence and Lorne Blair filmed an Indonesian man they nicknamed DJ, now known to be the late Mo Pai master John Chang, use power generated in his body to perform healing with acupuncture. In the videos, DJ's touch is seen to produce involuntary bodily jerks and twitches. Lorne underwent DJ's treatment after falling ill with a bad eye infection and attested to what he called powerful electrical current transmitted to his body from DJ's. DJ said the effects caught on camera were no more paranormal than an electric eel harnessing energy produced within its own body. At one point, a skeptical member of the film crew touched DJ on his power source just below the navel and recoiled as if she'd touched a live wire. With the cameras rolling, DJ shot a chopstick through a Formica table, but a piece splintered off and drew blood from a bystander, and from then on he refused to be filmed, saying the harm he caused violated the sacred oath he took when he learned the ancient art of generating internal electricity by combining yin energy with yang energy. But before that happened, again with cameras rolling continuously, he took a piece of newspaper from a member of the film crew, crumbled it, placed it on the ground, focused chi energy, and it caught fire. It did not appear to be a chemical reaction by surreptitiously combining two chemicals to spark a reaction, an old trick like the chopstick-through-the-table one, but you could always argue that DJ used sleight of hand because no one filmed from his backside. Those feats can be accomplished through trickery, so skepticism of them justified, but the healing power of acupuncture and the transmission of bodily energy are well-known and undeniably real, and there's no denying that DJ proved his mastery of them.
5. D.D. Home is one of the best-known spirit mediums of the nineteenth century. While in the presence of numerous investigators seated around a massive

mahogany table, he made the table slide on its own while barely touching it. Investigators were told to try to stop it and couldn't. The table rose completely off the floor with only the slightest touch from Home. On another occasion, Home caused a piano to play on its own and a handkerchief and other objects to fly out of the hands of the people holding them.[28] But his most impressive feats were performed while under the watchful eye of Sir William Crookes, a president of the British Royal Society. Crookes witnessed the medium take white hot coals by hand from a fireplace without being burned. He set up an experiment where the medium caused an accordion to play on its own while inside an electrified cage and nine investigators watched closely.[29]

6. After being struck by lightning on his twelfth birthday, Thomaz Coutinho of Brazil, a pharmacist by profession, found he could do things other people couldn't. Some are well-known, like metal bending, but Thomaz could do it easily with no theatrics. The metal contorted into loops as he stirred his coffee, witnessed by clinical psychologist Dr. Lee Pulos, journalist Gary Richman, and other interested observers. In subsequent demonstrations, he made it happen while not touching the metal object, and even while in an adjacent room. He contorted a knife into an S shape while holding it with one hand. He took the foil from a cigarette pack, tore it into pieces, folded them, and concentrated, and as the observers watched, it transmuted into a hard metal phoenix, which he gifted to a young couple on their honeymoon. He repeated the feat the following night. Five large metal salad spoons were seen to bend into 360-degree loops when he walked by, and a metal chair he was sitting in sagged as if made of soft wax. He transmuted a silver coin into a medallion embossed with the astrological sign of the person holding it, without ever touching the coin. He fused a broken chicken bone as another person held the two ends together, producing a bluish energy localized at the juncture. Thomas spoke of an intelligent electrical energy that could be used for healing. Tellingly, Dr. Pulos said that nineteen out of twenty-three children brought to him because of their "unusual proficiencies"—a.k.a. psychic abilities—had a history of experiencing severe electric shock.[30]
7. Philosopher Michael Grosso reported an incident where he tried the game "light as a feather" with a group of college students in a class he taught. The test

subject was a two-hundred-pound male student, and the "lifters" were a group of female students who put only their fingertips on him and lifted him fully off the ground as if he were, well, light as a feather.

8. Braude is another philosophy professor who witnessed the same PK effect happen, with a table. It suddenly felt weightless and buoyant, then floated off the floor for twenty seconds. It occurred in his apartment, and the table was his. The event sparked a lifetime fascination for studying the paranormal. Both professors, Braude and Grosso, held down regular academic positions and are known for the rigor they bring to their study.

Surprise, surprise, critics launched accusations of fraud and trickery at the above cases (Kulagina was even accused of keeping powerful magnets inside her vagina). We know that many PK effects can be reproduced by stage magicians, but does that sort of criticism accomplish anything more than obscuring a hidden reality? Apply Occam's Razor and ask what is the simplest answer that accounts for the evidence. Either PK is real, or it's the biggest con in history.

Spoons, Spoons, and a Few Forks

Which brings us to the ultimate stage magician trick that mimics PK: spoon bending. Oh, what a bad name it's gotten—so bad, it's become a meme for pseudoscience and flimflam. Yes, spoons can be bent through sleight of hand. Yes, it's a staple of stage performance, and prop spoons are available for purchase. And yes, bending spoons through only the power of intention has been done convincingly in front of and *by* investigators who genuinely wanted to know if it was possible. Not just spoons but forks, knives, keys, saw blades, and heavy metal rods. The demonstrations might get no more than an eye roll from Magneto, but to ordinary mortal witnesses it's more than convincing.

Of course, convincing is one thing and real is another. After spoon bending hit public attention during the 1970s, serious academic research papers came out claiming proof. Then, magicians like James Randi got involved in tightening the experimental controls and the proof vanished. The same people who'd been mangling metal (supposedly) were now staring at perfectly normal utensils, doing everything but eating with them.

No proof there, seemingly.

Randi also wrote a book that tore down Uri Geller's spoon bending claims,[31] though quite a number of researchers successfully tested Geller.[32] Those researchers and others say that PK seems to have a mind of its own. It'll work spectacularly under certain conditions, including controlled experiments, then play hide and seek, as if deliberately sabotaging attempts to prove its existence. But it doesn't erase the fact that tests set up by skeptics almost invariably fail or produce weak effects.[33] The counterargument is that the most successful demonstrations were done in atmospheres of fun and play, quite the opposite of the pressure-filled and at times antagonistic conditions set up by skeptics and skeptically-minded researchers.

A cursory search for evidence of spoon bending brings to light cases of fraud, trickery, and disproven claims. It could easily be the end of the road if not for the testimonies of scientists who held a spoon or other piece of metal, followed instructions, and right before their eyes they saw it perform unnatural contortions. Brian Josephson, a physicist and professor emeritus at Cambridge. Ed Kelly, cognitive scientist and professor of research at the University of Virginia. Dean Radin, director of science for IONS. Russell Targ, physicist and proponent of the reality of psychic functioning, who was skeptical about spoon bending until seeing it happen. His spoon rolled up into almost a complete circle, and another time he used a ⅜ inch aluminum rod that could not be bent even the slightest by him using physical force. Then, using the spoon bending technique, he claims to have bent it like a noodle all the way around, to 270 degrees.

As improbable as it sounds, and even knowing that such tricks can be performed and smart people can be fooled, the volume of personal testimonies from researchers, reporters, and everyday folk is pretty damn impressive. Some of them went into it thinking metal bending was bunk and were determined to prove it so, then they saw spoons fold over, witnessed the tines of forks twist like curly fries, and felt the metal suddenly heat up and soften like putty, making it easily bendable. It couldn't all be trickery, is the argument. In many cases these were ordinary people who proved it to themselves.

Randi argued that people get caught up in the moment and don't realize how much force they're applying, and that's reasonable. Unconscious musculature action is a real thing, but it doesn't explain the putty-like transformation of the metal, reported by many witnesses and depicted in a famous scene from *The Matrix*.

A big reason to think there's a more natural explanation is that the beginner spoon benders are instructed to rub the neck of the spoon, its weak point, between their fingers. Friction produces heat, and heat softens metal. Never mind that a whole lot of heat is needed to make steel lose its integrity, and that advanced spoon benders don't need the help. Metallurgical analysis of bent cutlery revealed that the boundaries where the grains of metal touched were fractured and torn when bent with physical force, but melted when supposedly bent by PK. Jack Houck, an astronautical engineer, thinks that the metal acts as a transducer for an unknown form of energy. The mind directs the energy into the metal and it has nowhere to go so it turns into heat. The heat melts the grain boundaries and the metal loses its structure.

Or just say it's all due to friction. Or it's fiction.

Loyd Auerbach is both a spoon bender and an accomplished stage magician. He knows all the tricks and can demonstrate them with masterful sleight of hand, acknowledging the performance side of it while swearing to the PK side of it. As an example, he holds up a spoon he bent through the bowl—at the strongest point, not the weakest—at an angle greater than 120 degrees. He witnessed people get caught up in the moment and bend spoons using physical strength, and also while using minimal force. He witnessed metal rods bend into pretzel shapes, and a woman unbend spoons and forks with a quick sliding movement using two fingers on each hand.

Whatever's really happening is definitely not fraud in every case, not with all the quality people involved and the evidence presented. Whether PK is an undiscovered force, an unknown physical state of matter, an effect produced electrically or magnetically, or wishful thinking, we can't say for sure. Maybe it really is better for the public to think PK isn't real. The last thing we need is a next-generation Ted Owens hurling hurricanes at anyone who pisses them off.

Like other paranormal phenomena, psychokinesis is an enigma worth studying, and perhaps crucial to study for the good of humanity. If you judge based only on perception you'd think there's no good evidence, no good research, to make the case. But that's far from the truth, as we've seen. The following chapters will continue challenging the assumption that there's nothing about this subject worth investigating. We will also challenge the assumption that science has no explanation

for the effects observed both under controlled conditions and in the wild. Maybe duplicating the feats of a Jedi like Luke Skywalker is and always will be impossible, but let's remember the adage that truth is stranger than fiction. In fact, maybe we are setting the bar too low.

CHAPTER 2

TELEPATHY: MIND TO MIND COMMUNICATION

George Murray might hold your hand, but other times he could just sit with you, and what happened next often amazed all who witnessed his feats: Murray could read your mind. Or at least, it sure seemed so.

An Oxford graduate, lecturer at Harvard, and distinguished diplomat who once served as vice-president of the League of Nations, George Murray was reserved about his mind-reading ability, even expressing feelings of shame but also a begrudging sort of recognition of it as a gift. Many people who claim to possess telepathic ability say they hate the stigma. They may learn things they *don't* want to know, such as who is secretly in bed with whom. But Murray's ability to pick up information simply by being near a person would have been heralded in other times and places. ESP evolved as a way of enhancing the odds of survival, according to a leading theory,[34] and you would appreciate and even revere a person who could read minds—it grants a huge evolutionary advantage.

Plus, imagine the stories you could tell around the campfire.

Unlike *Seatbelt Psychic* Thomas John giving psychic readings to unsuspecting Uber riders, Professor Murray gave his demonstrations to family and friends, and the publication of his experiments in 1915 produced some of the best evidence from that era. Murray's method was simple. While he waited in another room, the participants thought of a scene, real or imagined, and described it to others present. Notes were taken. Murray would then enter the room, take the person's hand and try to guess what they were thinking. Right more often than wrong, Murray's correct "guesses," as he called them, were stunningly accurate.

In one case, a family member thought of a memory of Murray's grandfather

opening the door for a woman on a ship. Murray said of the mental impression he received, "This is Grandfather. I think it is on a ship, and I think he is bowing and smiling to somebody—opening the door."[35]

Exactly right.

In another test of his ability, the participant thought of a scene written in a memoir by Russian author Sergey Aksakov. Children were embarking on a trip to their grandparents' home, and a young boy saw his mother kneeling beside the sofa where his father lay lamenting about having to leave them. Murray reported the following impression: "I should say this was Russian. I think it's a book I haven't read. Somebody's remembrance of childhood. A family traveling, the children, father and mother." He then zeroes in: "I should think [it's a story by] Aksakov. They are going to see their grandmother."

Exactly right.

In another test, the participant thought of a famous scene in the New Testament where St. Paul is in prison and his chains fall off. Murray received the impression of Paul escaping prison.

The list goes on and on, and Murray's documented hits, conducted over multiple sessions in front of witnesses, stretch the mind to come up with reasons why they're not telepathic. And we can rest assured he's not cold reading, using vague and general statements and powers of observation to give the impression of mind reading. That's how skeptics dismiss cases of telepathy, but Murray, a self-described skeptic and hardcore rationalist, wasn't out to fool anyone—he genuinely wanted to understand his gift. He wanted to demonstrate it. And he wanted to *study* it. A person with his high level of education and status in society doesn't need to fool anyone into believing something about him. It's not worth the risk for someone in his position.

Besides, the evidence speaks for itself, but it's not without detractors. Some say that Murray's feats are not telepathy, they are an ability to sense ideomotor muscle movements through touch, an ability demonstrated by stage magicians. However, Murray wasn't always touching a person when picking up what they were thinking, but neither were his demonstrations conducted under tightly controlled conditions, leaving room for doubt.

But for sake of argument, assume his ability is real. He's a telepath. What now?

Well, for one, we need the scientific community to find out how it works. But for whatever reason, a century later we're still stuck in neutral, and it's not like people haven't been trying to make the case for and against telepathy's reality. To the contrary, the scientists who think it's a real thing have pumped out study after study, and it all adds up to a significant effect size. The data show it, but don't break out the party hats just yet; the consensus opinion in science is still against it.

A 2005 Gallup poll reported that 31 percent of the US population believe telepathy is real (and 42 percent don't believe).[36] The numbers are higher in favor of telepathy outside the US and certain other Western countries. In some places, telepathy is a fact of life, especially in closely knit communities, and to question whether it's real is an insane idea. Many people report incidents and experiences that may be classified as telepathy, like when a parent gets a sudden feeling that their child needs them, or you know who is calling when the phone rings. Guessing who's calling on the telephone was tested experimentally by a British researcher, and just wait till you find out the results.

For now, rest assured, there's a lot of ground to cover. To believe is one thing, and to know is another. We want to know if telepathy is real, and for that we need evidence that meets the standards. George Murray gave us intriguing demonstrations, but acceptance in the mainstream scientific community requires rock solid proof. Let's see if we can find it, starting from the beginning.

Mental Telegraphy

Interest in telepathy surged during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By the time Frederick Myers founded the Society for Psychical Research in 1882, the Spiritualist movement had taken hold in America and other Western nations, and along with it came a new religion eager to prove the existence of the afterlife through spiritual mediumship, a.k.a. "telepathy with the dead." In much the same way that modern fads like TikTok suddenly appear and are adopted widely across a society, Spiritualism quickly found a big audience, and next thing you knew seances were happening seemingly on every corner. Mind you, live performances were the entertainment of the day during an era before television or radio.

Plenty of so-called mediums were nothing more than performers. People would attend seances simply to be amused or surprised. Then you had religious types who

spoke apocalyptically—it was all the devil's work—and on the other side, developed a third crowd that differentiated itself through a brand of militant rationalism rooted in atheism. It took hold with the intelligentsia of the time, essentially dividing those strata of society into two camps. Even though early psychical research was conducted by members of the intellectual elite, the enthusiasm of people like Myers for proving the reality of the afterlife (he wrote seminal books on the study of mediumship) created a schism that may explain the source of open antagonism against psychical research that continues to this day, according to parapsychologist Dean Radin.[37] When Myers tried to make a case for the afterlife by claiming mental telepathy between the living and the dead, he guaranteed that the hard rationalist wing of the scientific world would never, ever accept telepathy in general.

It's been that way for so long it's easy to forget how the antagonism started, but it sure explains why it persists despite us living in a completely new era of scientific understanding.

Into this mix we throw author Samuel Clemens, a.k.a Mark Twain, one of the most popular writers of his era, who in 1891 began publishing his personal accounts of what he called "mental telegraphy," the telegraph being the means of long-distance communication at the time. He surmised the cause of telegraphy to be a "finer and subtler form of electricity" that conveys thoughts from brain to brain through the air. In a series of articles for *Harper's* magazine, he recounted a multitude of personal experiences, building up to what he said was the oddest thing to ever happen to him.

The story begins with him idling a day away in early March when an idea for a book struck him full force. It would be about the Nevada Silver Rush, which he referred to as the "Great Bonanza," and the perfect person to write it would be an acquaintance, William Wright, a journalist he'd known a decade prior while working in Nevada. Clemens decided to send him a letter detailing his idea. It began as a modest query but ballooned into a full proposal.

Finished, he was about to put the letter into an envelope when the thought struck him that he should secure a publisher first. He got that ball rolling, and a week later received a large envelope in the mail, but it wasn't from the publisher. Clemens said he knew right away that it contained a letter from his old acquaintance, Mr. Wright,

asking his opinion about an idea for a book detailing the history of the Nevada silver mines. The letter was dated the same day the idea struck Sam and prompted him to write his letter to Wright. He further claimed to have made his prediction about the contents of Wright's letter before opening it in front of guests present in his home.

In his words:

Mr. Wright's letter simply contained what my own letter, written on the same date, contained, and mine still lay in its pigeonhole [note: a small compartment for keeping letters and documents], where it had been lying during the seven days since it was written. There was no clairvoyance about this, if I rightly comprehend what clairvoyance is. I think the clairvoyant professes to actually see concealed writing, and read it off word for word. This was not my case. I only seemed to know, and to know absolutely, the contents of the letter in detail and due order […]. Wright's letter and the one which I had written to him but never sent were in substance the same.

He continues:

Necessarily this could not come by accident; such elaborate accidents cannot happen. Chance might have duplicated one or two of the details, but she would have broken down on the rest. I could not doubt—there was no tenable reason for doubting—that Mr. Wright's mind and mine had been in close and crystal-clear communication with each other across three thousand miles of mountain and desert on the morning of the 2nd of March. I did not consider that both minds originated that succession of ideas, but that one mind originated it, and simply telegraphed it to the other.

Clemens then notes that the history of inventions is chock full of similar stories about multiple people getting the same idea simultaneously, and he speculates it's because the inventors are connected mentally even though they may be located far apart. Unless the ultimate source of the idea is universal (some sort of collective mind or God presence), it must originate with an individual and "leak" to others, perhaps because of a shared mental wavelength. The theory of evolution is a good example, coming to Charles Darwin and Alfred Wallace at around the same time.

Darwin was the first to publish the theory, and Wallace ended up as a historical footnote. Was this really a case of telepathy, or just an idea for a book whose time was due? We can't prove it either way.

Sam Clemens also spoke of a personal belief that he need only start writing a letter to a person and they would receive his message telepathically, prompting them to write to him. He reported numerous anecdotes about witnessing this seemingly telepathic power and gave reasons for why he thought it to be real, but none of them prove anything as far as science is concerned. In fact, Sam wasn't shy about embellishing tales to capture the interest of readers—it made him one of the most successful authors of his era. Undoubtedly, a skeptic would say he embellished or even made up his story about Mr. Wright, or it's coincidental. But presuming he didn't make it up, is his claim true that such elaborate accidents cannot happen?

Actually, they happen all the time, and in the age of mass communication they go viral on the internet, like in the case of Australian Bill Morgan. After a heart attack, he was clinically dead for fourteen minutes, and once revived he remained comatose. His doctors wanted to pull the plug, saying that a permanent vegetative state was his only possible future, but his sister intervened. After two weeks, Bill woke up feeling fine, and a year later he won a car in a scratch ticket lottery game. A local television news station heard about it and convinced him to participate in a feel-good story about his change of luck. He accompanied a news crew to the same store where he bought the winning scratcher and reenacted the story, and as the camera rolled he won $250,000.

There's no way of proving it was anything more than an elaborate accident, and that's a problem as far as science is concerned. People want to believe that someone like Bill deserved their change of luck, that providence smiled upon him. Mr. Clemens might argue the case if he were alive, but it's of no use scientifically unless it can be proven true or false. Good luck with that!

To make a case for telepathy, demonstrate it under controlled conditions, in a laboratory where coincidences and elaborate accidents can be ruled out. Spontaneous demonstrations tend to be more powerful and dramatic but can't be reproduced, making them scientifically unpalatable.

However, they are palatable if we can first prove that telepathy exists, in the same way that observations of lightning proved useful after the discovery of

electricity. Now we turn our attention to the first attempts to prove telepathy, which, like lightning, has been observed many times in many places and by many people.

Ganzfeld Experiments

We're sorry if you searched for evidence supporting the existence of telepathy and somehow ended up watching *The Ganzfeld Haunting*, a low-budget horror movie where a group of young psych students experiment with the ganzfeld technique (developed by psychologists at the turn of the twentieth century to facilitate the transfer of mental imagery from one mind to another), and end up unleashing hell on themselves. While the ganzfeld research is fascinating, if you watched the movie you wasted eighty-six minutes of your life. Seriously, don't do it.

A common impression of the ganzfeld technique falls under the same category of "don't do it"—not without adult supervision, at least. The reason why is ganzfeld uses sensory deprivation to block out everything except, presumably, telepathic images. It worked in experiments that produced hit rates at odds significantly greater than chance.[38] But the pictures of people doing ganzfeld experiments with cut-in-half ping-pong balls taped over their eyes spawned an outpouring of jokes and movie tropes, and one particular side effect of sensory deprivation made the experimental results especially hard to swallow: hallucinations. Mentally unhealthy people need not apply.

By shutting out distractions, ganzfeld technique does help, though, according to studies out of top institutions like Stanford and Cornell, at mentally receiving telepathic images by shutting out distractions. A typical experiment begins with one person chosen to receive images—that's the person with the ping-pong balls taped over their eyes and headphones over their ears emitting white noise—and another person chosen to mentally "send" images. It could be an image of an elephant or a microscope or something just as distinct and easily identifiable. Afterward, the target image is presented to the receiver along with three other random images, giving one in four (25 percent) odds of choosing the right one.

The common perception of telepathy is it involves speaking mind to mind, or hearing the thoughts of another person, or deliberately sending visual imagery like in the ganzfeld experiments. But the "percipients" say that the personal experience of telepathy is more like a download of information, an impression that pops to

mind, or feeling that comes out of nowhere. And it may not happen on demand, or at all, an important consideration when devising research studies. In the general population, telepathy appears to happen spontaneously in response to events that produce strong emotions. That happened to German psychiatrist Hans Berger.

In 1893, while training with the German cavalry, the dashing young Hans was thrown from a horse and into the path of a rolling artillery piece. As the heavy machinery bore down and his life flashed before his eyes, a sudden feeling overcame his sister hundreds of miles away. She sensed something very wrong and convinced their father to send Hans a telegram. Fortunately, they received back good news: because of the quick reflexes of the artillery driver, Hans narrowly escaped his brush with death, and the experience convinced him that, as mortal fear gripped, he somehow transmitted his thoughts to his sister.

It led to a lifelong pursuit to find the mechanism for telepathy. While Hans neither found it nor proved conclusively that it exists, he did make a huge contribution to science and medicine by inventing the electroencephalogram (EEG), a device for measuring the brain's surface electrical activity, leading eventually to the discovery of brain waves and other electrical features. Berger's enthusiastic belief in the existence of telepathy put him in the company of Arthur Conan Doyle, author of the Sherlock Holmes books, and Sigmund Freud, the creator of psychoanalysis, and of course Sam Clemens. It was a hot topic at the time.

The invention of the EEG gave hope for discovering a mechanistic cause for telepathy. Scientists like Berger pursued a hypothesis that brain waves carry information about thoughts in much the same way that radio waves carry information about sound. It should have been a simple matter of finding out how one brain signals another, but Berger's decades-long search proved fruitless. Later in his life, he admitted there was no way his brain could produce enough power to send a wave over the distance between him and his sister on that fateful day as a cavalryman. But decades later, Professor Michael Persinger took up the challenge by investigating how the brain interacts with electromagnetic fields. The planet itself is a generator of massive fields, and he theorized that they mentally interconnect all of humanity like an internet. Signals carried in such a way can be low power and still travel rapidly over vast distances, an important subject we'll be sure to revisit later.

Psychiatrist Dr. Carl Jung, who studied and experienced paranormal phenomena, said research in this direction is barking up the wrong tree because psi phenomena are not mental powers; they are objective events that occur spontaneously through the workings of nature, usually under certain conditions of high emotion, and words like telepathy and telekinesis are "concepts that explain nothing."[39]

Even so, scientists working on this question needed to devise experiments to test and hopefully explain, and the theory at the time was that telepathy operates as a sort of signal, and by reducing the noise—the mental chatter and interference—they could hone in on the signal. Thus, ganzfeld was born. It's how an electrical engineer would approach solving the problem, and initially it looked promising. During the 1980s, a meta-analysis of all published ganzfeld experiments to date gave a combined hit rate of 38 percent, producing odds against chance of a *trillion* to one.

Talk about spitting out your morning coffee—those are hard numbers for a hardened skeptic to swallow. But flaws were found and new experiments were run. A decade later, the fresh batch of results showed a hit rate of 34 percent, still well above chance at odds of forty-five thousand to one, but again, skeptics found minor flaws, and under an updated protocol, hit rates declined back to near chance expectation by 1999.[40]

Pack up and go home—there's nothing to see here. In the immortal words of Oxford physicist David Deutsch, when asked if quantum mechanics might one day explain how telepathy works: "It is utter rubbish!"[41]

Spoken like a true gentleman, and indeed that would have been the end of the matter, with telepathy joining phrenology in the trash bin of bad science. As often happens with eye-popping research, sober reality spoils the fun when methodological flaws are found and efforts at replication fail. But ganzfeld experiments continued under standards laid out by a critic, Dr. Ray Hyman, to make them airtight. Major labs around the world got involved. Standardized tests were devised, and hit rates bounced back into the low thirties, a significant effect size.

Today, debate centers around questions about sample size—is it large enough to make the data convincing?—and the quality of experiments—critics argue that there are good reasons why hit rates declined as controls tightened.

Some of the early ganzfeld studies that produced eye-popping numbers left open too many questions, like the fact that some of the images used to test for telepathy

are also known to be caused by sensory deprivation. And in some tests the receiver might have overheard what was going on in the other room with the sender. The most suspicious of all is the fact that the longer target images were used in a study, the higher the hit rate, suggesting that they degraded noticeably. Target images used only once scored a perfect 25 percent.

For scientists who are convinced, quibbling over the finer points of proper experimentation distracts away from the real show, the pursuit of the mechanisms involved. The body of evidence totals more than a hundred studies and six meta-studies, and it speaks for itself. The effect is proven to exist, something even skeptics agree on. Let's move on to finding out what it really is and how it works.[42]

But did the studies really measure telepathy, or some other anomaly?

That's right, other types of anomalous cognition can produce the same effects as telepathy. Clairvoyance, namely. In one popular type of clairvoyance experiment, a person attempts to mentally view an image sealed inside an envelope. There is no "sender," only a receiver. The experiments are run double-blind to rule out the possibility of the viewer mind-reading someone who knows the envelope's contents. In telepathy experiments researchers also had to rule out a test subject actually projecting their consciousness into the sender's room and seeing the images on their screen, an ability demonstrated by the psychics Ingo Swann and Alex Tanous in separate experiments.

In a rare collaboration, prominent parapsychologist Charles Honorton teamed up with prominent critic Ray Hyman to comb through all the ganzfeld studies to date, whittling down to the strongest ones then running the data. In the end, they agreed that the outcomes were significant and not due to chance. Honorton said the ganzfeld experiments successfully proved the existence of telepathy—the numbers don't lie, and the studies held up to high standards. Hyman agreed about the quality but disagreed with the conclusion. He only conceded that more study was warranted.[43]

Only a minority of scientists will go on record saying that the study results prove the reality of telepathy. Instead, the scientific establishment at its most generous agrees with Ray Hyman that the results are interesting, and less generously writes it off as a waste of time studying something that they believe cannot exist in the first place. Physicist and Nobel laureate Brian Josephson suspects that scientific

validation of telepathy and other forms of extrasensory perception (ESP, explained below) such as psychokinesis is a game-changer; we'd have to accept a "new reality" beyond materialism, the paradigm that dominates scientific thinking today.[44] After a lifetime of working at the highest levels of academia, he thinks the real issue that establishment science has with accepting the ganzfeld studies is it would force every scientist on the planet to account for variables they can neither measure nor reliably predict, and to devise new models for their fields of work. Science wouldn't just be turned upside down, it would be obliterated. No thank you.

We're going to need truly mind-blowing, incontrovertible evidence before that happens. Did the biggest name in parapsychology provide it?

The Duke of ESP

J. B. Rhine is that name, and whether you know it or not, you've almost certainly seen the Zener cards he made famous. Each card is printed with one of five basic symbols—a circle, a plus sign, three wavy lines, a square, and a five-pointed star. Very distinct images, and very simple math, giving a 20 percent chance of randomly guessing the correct card. You may have seen Zener cards used in *The Gift*, starring Cate Blanchett and Keanu Reeves, and if so you're probably wondering what the cards have to do with ESP experiments. Blanchett, playing the role of a psychic, uses the Zener cards more like a tarot deck. In *Ghostbusters,* Bill Murray's character uses the cards under the guise of a scientific purpose to impress a pretty co-ed.

Rhine set up card guessing experiments under rigorous controls in a university lab at Duke University, along with his wife, Louisa, who, like her husband, obtained her PhD in botany from the University of Chicago. Most impressively, he ran more than a hundred thousand trials and continuously worked to improve the experiments. He endeavored in his life's work to collect enough data to either conclusively prove or disprove ESP, a term he coined. With such a large dataset, the law of averages says the results should have been at or near 20 percent, and that's what early group testing showed before the numbers really started piling up. The breakthrough came when Rhine discovered certain students scoring above average and used them for telepathic tests. Hit rates jumped by 50 percent. In one series of trials, where the sender and receiver were kept in separate rooms, the hit rate averaged a whopping 64 percent, and over the course of 950 trials, it remained above 50 percent.

Remember, the mean chance was 20 percent. In one trial, a star card guesser scored a perfect 25/25.[45] Odds against chance are billions to one.

As you might expect, doubt was cast on Rhine's experiments. People questioned the methods and the math, and even accused him of fraud, but the math was confirmed, and the methods checked out. And as for fraud, it's hardly worth mentioning. By all accounts, the Duke lab used some of the tightest controls in the history of social science research. Most importantly, twenty out of thirty-three replication experiments by different labs produced significant results.[46]

So why isn't telepathy confirmed? Good question. The most plausible answer is the data conflict with existing theory that telepathy simply cannot exist. Astrophysicist Arthur Eddington, one of the first scientists to confirm Einstein's theory of relativity, famously quipped, "Never trust an experimental result until it is confirmed by theory."[47] But this is, of course, the reverse of how science is supposed to work. The first step of the scientific method is to construct a hypothesis or theory, then test it. Based on observation, Rhine came up with a theory that telepathy is real, then tested it from many different angles, running a multitude of experiments under controlled conditions. The experimental results confirmed the theory. What more can you ask for?

But a deep dive into the Rhine's life and motivations reveal a usual suspect popping up. Archival researcher Stacy Horn, author of the book *Unbelievable*,[48] spent more time in the Duke University archives combing through the Duke lab results than perhaps any other person alive. She said Rhine's research was an attempt to prove that life exists after death, and told the Duke alumni magazine:

Basically, Rhine said we know that when we die, the body dies, the body decays, it's over. We need to find something about ourselves that exists independently of the body. Otherwise, when we die, that's it. So if telepathy operates independent of the body, it opens the door to a possibility that there is something within us that can survive death.[49]

Existing materialist theory says that life ends at death. See the problem?

In the same interview, Horn also said:

Rhine—and I would include his wife, Louisa, who was equally critical to all this research, too—refined the controls and the statistical methods for analyzing their results in a way that nobody had before. I went through all the various objections, the critics over the years who accused them of fraud or making mistakes with the math, and I examined all these claims and found that they had no basis.

You might want to come up with other explanations for these effects, but you can't say they are the result of sloppy controls, fraud, or wishful thinking. Based on these experiments, there does seem to be an unidentified source of [telepathic] information out there. Unfortunately, we don't know how it's transmitted or how it's processed, but these effects nonetheless seem to be real.

The numbers don't lie, but they can be disbelieved and doubted, and the criticism of the Rhines' research worked well enough to forever put an asterisk next to the results.

*Believe it at your own risk.

Challenges and New Directions

Put yourself into the shoes of a researcher trying to prove that telepathy is the cause of an observed effect. First, you must design experiments that exclude the possibility of something other than telepathy producing the effect, and even after proving its existence and that it's anomalous, you next have to prove or at least hypothesize how it works if you want the wider scientific community to use your study as anything more than tissue paper. And the only reliable data about what actually happens during telepathic communication, presumably, comes from the people who experience it—and even then, collecting data from them presumes they are able to articulate what they experience.[50]

And even if you can do all that, you must wrestle with the fact that telepathy happens spontaneously for most people, and you are likely to encounter only skepticism or worse from your colleagues outside of the small circle of parapsychologists who love this stuff. It's enough to make you wish you'd pursued another field of study, like acting.

(Then again, desperate for work, you could end up on the cast of *The Ganzfeld Haunting*. . .)

And as if that's not enough for researchers to contend with, according to psychic spy No. 001, US Army Warrant Officer (retired) Joe McMoneagle, we are in pursuit of a phenomenon that in the end can't be distinguished from imagination, not even by people like him who honed their abilities for decades under operational conditions in the military (a fact that's proof in itself, and a subject we're saving for the final chapter). The mental impressions come to the viewer in much the same way—or even identically—to impressions produced by the imagination, like during a daydream. Early experiments in remote viewing involved telepathy, where a sender traveled to a location and a receiver remained in the laboratory and tried to receive mental impressions of the location.[51] Turns out, telepathy as we understand it is definitely not the psychic function that remote viewers utilize. That didn't stop the CIA from giving the green light to take the research operational, eventually spawning numerous high-level programs run by intelligence and military organizations.

But that's not to say that remote viewers are "making it up," a common association with imagination; it's that the same brain areas and functioning involved in imagination are also involved in telepathic and other psychic functioning, and imagination—which involves multiple areas of the brain[52]—is the mental interface. We'd be wise, then, to focus research on the imagination function for clues to the workings of psychic functions. Studies (the exception noted later) failed to locate psychic functioning in the brain, but there is a close correlation with dreaming.[53] Dreaming is an experience of meaning, and anomalous information is often communicated through a felt sense of meaning.

We'd be wise, also, to learn all we can about how dreams communicate meaning. The way the ego (associated with the conscious side of the mind) interacts with a dream and receives information through non-sensory means is similar to how telepathy appears to function. Plus, dreaming is produced in the subconscious mind, and similarly, the remote viewing protocols are basically a means for the conscious mind to gain access to information known to the subconscious. Ultimately, it means our pursuit leads us there. If the evidence is to be believed, psychic functioning is an unconscious process.[54]

Those facts must be grappled with, and that we're studying something which is intuition-based and dreamlike. Tell that to a materialist if you really want to make

them laugh. They wouldn't be caught dead believing in any such hocus pocus, let alone studying it—unless perhaps they thought it could lead ultimately to a provable theory of consciousness. That could win them a Nobel Prize.

But if consciousness is not a material phenomenon, material science will never answer the biggest questions. Until we devise a scientific method for studying non-material phenomena (which, according to materialist belief, can't exist in the first place), we can't say for sure that consciousness doesn't originate outside of physical matter. If consciousness is fundamental to reality—a theory that leads easily to explanations of psychic functioning and other aspects of the paranormal—the mainstream approach of studying consciousness as emergent from biological processes (matter) is completely reversed and therefore incapable of finding out its secrets.

So, you see, studying telepathy is hobbled from the get-go, as far as mainstream science is concerned. The ganzfeld experiments and Rhine's research show significant effect sizes but don't prove causation, and like Hans Berger, we're stuck with evidence showing that something really unusual is really happening, that it's probably some sort of psychic functioning (what else could it be?), but good luck trying to prove how it works. And without causation, we're looping endlessly back to where we started.

But science is about more than crunching numbers; it's about observation and phenomenology, and here we find ground to stand on. Dr. Berger observed that something highly unusual happened between him and his sister on that fateful day. Presumably, it had something to do with his brush with death and the powerful emotions it produced. If it were the only such case, we could make a strong argument that it was coincidence: his sister just happened to sense something wrong with him when something really was wrong. But far too many people have experienced things that we lump under the category of paranormal to say they are isolated incidents.

It brings us back to Samuel Clemens and his claims that elaborate accidents can't happen. If we're to say there was no plausible way other than telepathy for Berger's sister to get such a strong feeling about her brother, we'd also have to consider all the false alarms, too; when, for instance, somebody comes running because they feel something bad is happening to a loved one and it turns out to be

nothing. These cases don't make the evening news, so if we're going down that road to find answers, we damn sure better not get fooled by confirmation bias.

It's safe to say that most of us have experienced something that smacks of telepathy, and while it proves nothing in the absolute sense, it is a starting point for understanding a class of phenomena. The experience could be as simple as being able to finish a sentence started by someone close to you, or as widely known as a mother's intuition. It could be the feeling that wakes you in the middle of the night knowing that someone personally close to you is in danger or has passed away, which are common reasons for spontaneous telepathic experiences. It could be the sense of knowing who is calling when the telephone rings, or that an important email just dropped unexpectedly into your inbox.

Unfortunately, anecdotes only tease us with something that appears to exist just beyond our reach. In reality, there are conventional answers that stop us cold from claiming the anomalies are caused by ESP. They could be, but can we prove it?

Biologist Rupert Sheldrake claims he did. In one of his cleverly designed studies, research participants had to guess who was calling them on the telephone, choosing from among one of four people they knew, giving a one in four chance (25 percent) of guessing correctly, but the success rate reported by Sheldrake was a staggering 45 percent.[55] Similarly designed experiments for anticipating who was about to email produced success rates between 43–47 percent.[56] Much like the ganzfeld studies, though, Sheldrake's research came under heavy criticism and mainstream marginalization.

Like Sheldrake, the researchers who study telepathy want to produce solid evidence that it exists. To meet those standards, research participants are chosen at random, and studies are designed so other labs can reproduce them. The studies presuppose that telepathy is a universal ability, but what if it were true for only a small swath of the population? What if telepathy grows stronger or weaker as we age, making traditional university studies inherently flawed? In the name of creating scientifically strong studies, we may be sacrificing stronger results.

It Takes Two

That's where twin studies stepped in and showed great promise. Twins, engaged couples, and married couples scored significantly better than control groups in

telepathy studies,[57] presumably because close relationships create deeper connections between their minds. Telepathy studies that paired strangers together produced significantly weaker results, lending weight to the hypothesis that closeness doesn't just breed familiarity, it is conducive for telepathy.

But the counterargument is it's not telepathy, it's "thought concordance," similarity in thought patterns that make it easy to guess what someone close to you is thinking and how they will respond in a given situation.

On the other hand, according to researcher Doug Marman, close relationships involving shared perceptions and feelings between sentient beings produce "entangled" states.[58] These "lenses of perception" facilitate telepathy and other psi functioning through a shared point of view deeper than the level of thought, at the level of sentience. Close twins are the perfect group to test out the theory on.

Identical twins who reported prior psi experiences were expected to produce dramatic hit rates when paired in ganzfeld studies but did not.[59] Although hit rates in the mid-thirties are pretty darn good when mean chance is 25 percent, they don't exceed results produced by studies that randomly paired together participants to play the roles of sender and receiver. Studies that paired parents with children, on the other hand, produced 43.5 percent hit rates, and sibling pairings produced a whopping 71 percent![60] Siblings tend to think a lot alike, once again suggesting thought concordance as the cause of the dramatic results.

Researchers found that twins are not necessarily better at ganzfeld, but when they do click psychically, the results are dramatic. These twins are found to be closer in appearance physically, and report strong emotional connections. And although it's not proven as a reason for why they may have a telepathic connection, an intriguing hypothesis is that they spend more time in the womb as a single zygote before splitting and continuing to develop separately.[61] Talk about entanglement! Existing for up to twelve days as a single being gives reason to think those twins can telepathically pick up on each other's thoughts and feelings.

But for all the talk of twins being of one mind, the truth borne out by studies is it's not the rule. Researchers say that some twins share a bond that's like two people sharing one existence, or sentience, but other twins deliberately try to differentiate from each other. They may put up walls. They say all the talk of twin telepathy is bunk as far as they're concerned. So, what we can surmise is, if telepathy is real,

and if it's true that close emotional connection enhances it, there are some twins who have that connection and also possess a high capacity for telepathic functioning. In those cases, we could expect truly impressive displays.

While parapsychological studies of twins failed to produce airtight evidence of "twin telepathy" generally (in some studies the results were actually *worse* than chance), in a test performed in front of a television audience, one twin was hooked up to a polygraph machine and kept in a distant, soundproof room. Behind the other twin, a dropped plate shattered, startling them. The polygraph needles jumped. In subsequent live tests, one twin plunged their arm into ice water and the other reacted with a sharp change in respiration.[62] And while those tests weren't performed under controlled conditions, controlled ones performed later reproduced the results.[63]

The experiments suggest an intriguing connection that runs deeper than the standard understanding of biology. And while it's not exactly Jean Grey from *X-Men* hearing the thoughts of people around her or peering into the secret past of Wolverine, the tests produced undeniable physiological measurements suggesting a connection between twins that's more than skin-deep. We can add it to other evidence of twin telepathy, like the case where one twin was having a heart attack and the other, thousands of miles away, suddenly felt sharp chest pains, and another where a twin felt the sudden urge to check on her sister in the bath and discovered her drowning. Then again, these phenomena are reported by people generally, not just twins.

If we take such examples as evidence, it makes sense to consider cases where one twin was oblivious to the other's crisis or pain. Is that evidence against the existence of telepathy among twins? No, but it shows that anecdotes aren't enough.

The Brain Does Not Lie

We said earlier that psychic functioning had not been pinpointed in the brain, but that's just one opinion, and that particular study lacked the key ingredient: a research subject drawn from the short list of psychic all-stars who have demonstrated their abilities under controlled conditions. Famous "mentalist" Gerard Senehi—yes, he is a performance magician who knows all the tricks, but just wait—is one of them. The researchers were aware of previous studies showing a correlation between psychic functioning and right brain hemisphere activity and

wanted to test it.[64,65] As an fMRI machine scanned his brain, he performed a task where he attempted to draw images received telepathically.

Sure enough, Gerard not only performed the telepathic task successfully, but his right parahippocampal gyrus activated big time.[66] It's a brain area associated with episodic memory and visuospatial processing. It helps with the formation of short-term memories, and Gerard's lit up during an fMRI brain scan, presumably as he received the visual image of the target (or made one heck of a guess). A control subject failed the telepathic task, and the scan showed him trying to use this brain's left hemisphere. Presumably, his rational left brain took over a task meant for his intuitive right brain. Intuition is associated with right-brain functioning.[67] The right hemisphere is mostly non-verbal. It gives you an image, a gut feeling, or a sudden insight.

Insight operates nonconsciously, and Senehi says that the powers of the mind he utilizes operate effortlessly, or nonconsciously. He doesn't "activate a power," he just gets himself into a receptive and enthusiastic state of mind and rolls with it. And usually something magical happens, but sometimes it doesn't.

Now, you might be thinking that the Amazing Randi wants to enter this chat and point out that some of the "powers" Senehi supposedly demonstrates during his stage performances are well-known magic tricks. True. It also helps a magician's reputation if they are rumored to possess mental powers, so brain scans be damned, whatever he was doing while inside that fMRI machine was not telepathy! The case of Uri Geller, another well-known performance magician, should give us pause, too, if not stop us outright from saying that any of them are more than performers. A skeptic like Randi would laugh us out of the room if we tried to claim otherwise. The case against Geller sure looks solid until you review the evidence presented by *real* scientists who studied him under controlled conditions, some of which are detailed in declassified CIA documents. Then the laughter stops and the *real* inquiry begins.

So, before paging Mr. Randi to rain on the claims that Gerard *could be* a real psychic, let's look at the fact that during the experiment this stage magician drew images received in his mind that were close representations of the target images supposedly sent telepathically. He did it under controlled conditions. His brain showed unusual activity that correlates with other studies of psychic functioning.

And according to him, he developed his telepathic ability through fifteen years of intensive meditation practice. He's a yogi. Countless thousands or even millions of people throughout history, in the East and the West, say that they, too, developed telepathic ability through the same practices. There's either something to their claims, or else they're all fooling themselves.

Could Senehi be both a performer *and* a psychic? It's one thing to make claims and another to back them. Telepathy is not an extraordinary claim—it's been measured not only in humans but also in animals, and we're even producing it now through technology. But just as importantly, where's the evidence proving it *isn't* real?

In fairness to scientific tradition, the study done with Gerard was not replicated in other labs, and it only involved one session with him and one with a control subject. The question here is less about whether an individual has telepathic ability and successfully demonstrated it, and more about whether it can be proven scientifically to exist in the first place. And the answer is yes, something that sure sounds like what we call telepathy has been measured repeatedly under controlled conditions. It shows up in the data and in the case studies.

Another star test subject is Sean Harribance, who, among other things, demonstrated the ability to extract specific biographical information by touching personal photos of the target, known as psychometry. While hooked up to a sophisticated 19-channel EEG and holding a sealed envelope containing a target photo, Harribance attempted the task, and during the successful trials his brain showed increased activity in the same area of the right brain hemisphere as Gerard Senehi.[68] Other tests measured increased Alpha brain wave activity in the 8–12 hertz range, associated with a relaxed but alert state of mind.[69] Most interestingly, as the tests were run, the target individual's brain wave patterns synchronized with Sean's.

By observing what happened in his brain as he performed the task, the researchers created a model for magnetically stimulating the brain of a volunteer who showed no aptitude for psychic functioning. You'll never guess what happened next. The volunteer scored higher on the same task given to Sean, raising the hope that technology will one day enable everyone to perform psychic feats, assuming of course such things are possible.

Preselecting people who perform well on tests for telepathy shows promise, but there are only so many people like Sean Harribance to go around. Then again, creative people like dancers, musicians, and artists also score higher than average on such tests—effect sizes double.[70] Researchers theorize that creativity enhances connection between the ego and the unconscious mind, and that the unconscious is naturally psychic.[71] That theory may also explain why children showing natural aptitude for spontaneous psychic functioning tend to lose it after entering the school system. The left-brain rational thought processes needed to do well academically drown out the nonrational, right-brain processes associated not only with creativity and psychic functioning but also with the spontaneous, imaginative play activities of early childhood. Experiments to test if the brain has a natural psi-inhibitory mechanism suggest that the left medial frontal region, used for executive functioning, plays a role. It blocks out irrelevant information so a person can focus on what's right in front of them, known as the "attention to life" theory first proposed by philosopher Henri Bergson. According to neurologist and professor Dr. Morris Freedman, it's also blocking out telepathy, psychokinesis, and anything else that distracts from giving attention to the immediate environment. Freedman's experiments deployed a high-tech machine to magnetically disrupt functioning in the left frontal region that he believes to be the inhibitor. Subjects subsequently performed significantly better than a placebo group on tests to move an arrow on a screen with their mind, an experiment structured similarly to the REG experiments conducted at PEAR and other labs. Add to those findings the fact that people with thin boundaries between the conscious self and the unconscious self are prone to having paranormal experiences,[72] and we have evidence showing that brain stimulation and hemisphere synchronization strongly correlate with psychic functioning.

While correlation does not equal causation, researchers have shown that engagement in creative activity synchronizes the brain hemispheres and essentially makes more of the brain's capacity available than normally available. During psychic functioning and deep states of creativity and meditation, some people report that the center of their brain—the corpus callosum, the nerve bundle that facilitates communication between the brain's hemispheres—feels unusually energetic, even warm. But unlike Lucy, the character played by Scarlett Johansson in the movie

with the same name, who develops superpowers after unlocking 100 percent of her brain, it's not because humans normally use only 10 percent—that's an urban myth. Bradley Cooper's character in the movie *Limitless* develops powers under the same premise, but neuroscientists say there's not a shred of truth to it. Apparently, if there's any truth to unlocking greater brain capacity, it's more likely to be found in the strong bonds between its hemispheres.

Research findings suggest that engagement in creative activity *before* telepathic testing, especially the free association kind used most famously in psychoanalysis, would raise hit rates. We'll explore the reasons for it next, but first, do you agree with the claim that there are no good explanations for how the paranormal works? Or do you think perhaps skeptics aren't looking hard enough, or in the right places and ways? The best evidence is still waiting for us to investigate, but let's pause to think about what all this adds up to so far.

Something doesn't add up, actually; it doesn't make sense why the good research is dismissed then disappears behind a smoke screen. Such treatment of other areas of research wouldn't be tolerated by the scientific community, but there's a double standard with the paranormal. Skeptics seem to forget that it's not the job of scientists to prove anything; their job is to gather data and present it. And while the causes for the effects uncovered by research into the paranormal are debatable, good explanations have been offered and investigated. Some of the research has withstood heavy scrutiny. So why do we keep circling back to the same question about whether the phenomena are real to begin with?

The answer boils down to the elusiveness of what we're studying. The necessity of operating in complex physical and social environments may have made the phenomena go underground. Or in the language of psychoanalysis, it receded deep into the unconscious mind. The theory is that paranormal functioning such as telepathy and psychokinesis is disruptive to the regular order of things, and at some point humans decided they would rather have order and suppressed everything that didn't fit into that schema. If everyone could read minds and easily call out falsehoods, imagine how it would cause overnight change in politics and public relations. Modern society couldn't exist in its current form. And what would that lead to? Chaos, or worse, the sorts of breakdowns in societal order that have led to slaughter in the past. That sort of fear seems to be driving the rejection of what the

science tells us.

Another conclusion we can draw at this point is that we've already plumbed as many answers as we're likely to get from the raw data. Prestigious labs have given us mountains' worth, proving that the effects exist, but only inching us closer to finding the causes. Like Sisyphus pushing the rock uphill, every time science seems to get close to the top, something comes along to cast doubt on the data and the research, and we end up back where we started. While the belief that the evidence isn't there or is untrustworthy is clearly wrong, it's also true that clear cause and effect relationships are missing. And the approach of looking for physical causes will never get us over the hump if paranormal phenomena are based in the mind and consciousness. Therefore, we will look for answers from the scientists who study the mind.

Telepathic Tuning Fork

Mental health professionals may form close relationship bonds with their patients, and we know that it creates a key condition for telepathic communication. Psychotherapists are specialists in the psyche, defined as the mind in its totality, both the conscious and unconscious, and psyche is the root of the word *psychologist*. While psychologists may specialize in specific aspects of the mind, psychotherapists specialize in knowing the entire mind. And going back to Sigmund Freud and beyond, they have reported unusual mental connections with their patients. Freud dubbed it "thought-transference," which is telepathy by another name.

Freud defined thought-transference as a form of unconscious communication and used the term to specifically describe the unconscious transfer of meaningful information between therapist and patient, but no doubt, he was also distancing himself from the paranormal associations with telepathy. The paranormal is a short step away from the occult and sticky issues of theology and religious belief, leading to a quick death in the mainstream scientific community.

Psychoanalysts are careful to avoid those landmines while advancing the understanding of the apparently psychic connection with their clients. In fact, the more open-minded among them express hope that our understanding will advance enough to remove the stigma of "para" from psychology and just understand psychic phenomena as the normal functioning of the mind continually scanning the

environment using senses other than the physical ones. The father of modern psychology, Harvard professor William James, said as much.[73] It's also the underpinning of First Sight, a theory that psychic functioning is a side effect of how the unconscious mind operates.

One of the first things anyone who studies the unconscious mind is bound to notice is how porous it is. You could say it has boundary issues because it can step over any boundary the ego may put up. In order to function in society, people put up strong boundaries, generally doing well in maintaining them as long as they are psychologically healthy. But patients in psychotherapy have often experienced traumas that crack their resistance against the powerful and vast unconscious. They are "porous," and their boundaries are "permeable," characteristics also of creative people, savants, psychics, and others. Patients in psychotherapy tend to be dissociative, too, disconnected from the healthy aspects of their mind.

Therapy is in large part an attempt to reconnect them with those healthy parts, and according to psychotherapist Sharon Farber and others, to do that the therapist must be willing to participate in their patients' dissociation. The therapists, too, must let down their boundaries and get in sync with their patients, especially emotionally.[74] Dr. Farber calls it "becoming a telepathic tuning fork."

It means not only bringing the tools of rationality and psychological theory into the consulting room, but the therapist also closely monitors their mind and body for responses to receiving information telepathically. It's quite the high-wire act because the therapist must go out on a limb to follow those hunches and feelings while being careful to avoid disturbing the dark waters of the patient's mind, or introducing something that doesn't belong. Patients are highly susceptible to suggestions from their therapist, and a wrong suggestion can spell trouble, so the therapist may circumscribe the potential pitfalls by asking a patient to associate with certain images that come to mind spontaneously or in dreams. That way, if the therapist's "hunch" is correct, association creates a pathway to getting to the content that's causing dysfunction and pain, and if it's not right, no harm done. Try another path.

The question for science is how those hunches come to the therapist. Sure, their training and education and other aspects of rational, conscious thought are valuable, but being a telepathic tuning fork means feeling what the patient is feeling and

literally picking up on thought processes and their preconscious or unconscious aspects. The dissociation of the patient gets projected onto the therapist, activating the therapist's mirror neurons to feel what the patient feels and understand it much more deeply and personally than through the usual rational means.[75] In relational psychology it's called *projective identification*.

Other people call it mind reading, and in a sense it's what the field of neuroscience is about. The difference is neuroscience uses technology like the MRI machine, rather than what's built into the mind and nervous system.

As early as the mid–twentieth century, psychoanalysts were asking if their "delusional" patients who claimed to read minds weren't actually telling the truth.[76] It raises the question of whether claims of telepathy may be delusional in some cases and paranormal in others. That's the plot of the TV movie *Thoughtcrimes*, where a woman is institutionalized after hearing voices and they turn out to be real, not delusional. If the voices heard by people labeled as schizophrenic are actually coming from the minds of the people around them, the repression of telepathy can be understood as a survival mechanism. Since telepathy isn't "officially" real, the field of psychology would mistake its real occurrence as mental illness, and that's bad news for the people hearing voices. According to Dr. Malidoma Patrice Somé, a West African elder educated by Jesuit priests and trained in the West, what some call mental illness is recognized by his people as a spiritual crisis, and their approach to healing is through incorporation of the experience. Depth psychologist Ed Koffenberger likens the institutionalization of such people to prisoners of a prevailing society that doesn't want to be questioned.

People may also hear voices while awake and simultaneously dreaming, known as REM intrusion. REM (rapid eye movement) is the sleep stage associated with vivid dreaming, and when it happens while awake, you can imagine the mental fireworks! Auditory hallucinations including the sense of speaking with someone and hearing voices are common during REM intrusion episodes. It's commonly experienced while a person is on the boundary between sleeping and waking, known as hypnagogia when it happens while falling asleep, and as hypnopompia while waking up, but it may also happen while fully awake. Physician Lon Jones, the inventor of Xlear, credits a voice he heard in his mind just after waking up for giving him the correct formula for his nasal spray.[77] People under hypnosis also

exhibit brain wave patterns that are similar to hypnagogia.[78] The science of the mind has given us clear evidence that hearing voices is, in some cases, a natural phenomenon.

Since psychic functioning appears to come naturally to the unconscious mind, and psychoanalysis created tools for safely accessing it, parapsychologists would be wise to page psychoanalysts to their labs to aid in their experiments. After all, Freud did say, "If I had to live my life over again, I should devote myself to psychical research, rather than psychoanalysis."[79]

Just don't say that too loudly. The doctor's theories about the unconscious mind, which revolutionized not only psychology but also modern society, have been maligned enough already. Psychology, as a science, shies away from investigating the deep, primitive mind, due in part to the thrashing it took for emphasizing theory over data back in Freud's day. Yet this part of the mind seems to be behind the occurrences of at least some paranormal phenomena and others that resemble them. They don't jibe with how we think the world works, but it's debatable whether we truly perceive reality as it is. Cognitive psychologist Donald Hoffman theorizes that evolution grants advantages to seeing reality the way that suits you best rather than as it really is, and one way that manifests is through the social and material necessity of being "normal" rather than someone who "hears voices." Some theories about the paranormal play on the assumption that possessing psychic abilities would grant an evolutionary advantage, but it would hold true only in cultures that accept the reality of such abilities. In others, they are seen as a threat to normal order, and accepting them is deemed as too disruptive not only to society but also to established science.

It's no wonder, then, that advanced Western cultures don't accept telepathy as real, but other cultures, especially aboriginal ones, do.

Scientists willing to stick their neck out by suggesting that phenomena such as telepathy could be real speculate that it has something to do with how consciousness is produced. The accepted theory says consciousness is a physical process, but after decades of trying, science still hasn't proven it. Talk about a shaky foundation to one of the pillars of mainstream belief! The alternative, that consciousness is "nonlocal" (does not originate in the brain), is gaining momentum. We even have theories that explain consciousness through quantum processes, the branch of physics that deals with the subatomic world. Understanding quantum phenomena

begins with the fact that everything in the physical universe is governed by fields: electromagnetic, Higgs, and so on. Dozens of quantum fields are operating wherever you are right now, interacting with the incomprehensible number of atoms and particles that make up your body (an estimated 7 billion-billion-billion atoms in a 150-pound body). And all those atoms are dancing to a beat emanating from quantum sources detectable only with the most sensitive (and expensive) equipment, if at all, and comprehensible only through the most complex mathematics. It's a note of caution to heed before we rush headlong into quantum science to give us the explanations that other fields of science have so far failed to do.

Placing consciousness in the quantum arena opens up new areas for science to investigate the paranormal, and we will continue doing that. For now, understanding how fields interact with the mind is what we really want to know, and thankfully one pioneering professor with a love for research and a sophisticated lab at his disposal gave us evidence that some phenomena of the paranormal kind, telepathy in particular, are indeed explainable this way.

Riding the Earth's Magnetic Field

Neuropsychologist Dr. Michael Persinger, now deceased, former professor at Laurentian University in Canada, conducted leading-edge research on the effects of magnetic fields on the brain. Theorizing that information travels mind to mind via electromagnetic fields, he jumped the hurdle that Hans Berger couldn't pass over by showing that the strength of the signal produced by the brain is unimportant. The signal's frequency pattern is what matters, particularly when it's in resonance with the Earth's geomagnetic field—which right now is penetrating your skull. You'll recall that Berger admitted his brain couldn't have generated the power to send a signal over the vast distance between him and his sister at the moment his life flashed before his eyes, but Persinger's theory transcends that limitation.

That's not what he's famous for, though; he's famous for inventing the device known as the "God Helmet," which produces rotating magnetic fields to stimulate the brain's temporal lobes. Then the fun begins. Want to meet God? The helmet made some people feel the presence of the divine. Some felt the presence of deceased loved ones. Known psychics were tested while wearing the helmet and it reportedly enhanced their abilities.

Several attempts failed to reproduce the "God" study, casting doubt on Persinger's results. Other experiments did pass peer review, though, and can be read in mainstream scientific journals.[80]

In a cleverly designed experiment, the professor tested pairs of men and women who shared an emotional connection. Under double-blind conditions, one member of a pair wore the helmet while the other looked at a postcard meant to evoke shared memories with their partner. Sometimes the helmet was active and sometimes not. When active, the accuracy ratings significantly increased.[81] Persinger tested siblings to measure whether stimulating the brain of one sibling elicited similar changes in the other. It did.[82] Interestingly, that experiment didn't produce the same results when strangers were paired for testing, further suggesting that resonance between people is a factor in successful telepathic transfer. Another experiment showed the same sort of "brain entanglement" occurring when one person was exposed to a flashing light and it synchronized with the other person's emission of biophotons (light particles produced by the body that carry information), but only while both were wearing the helmet.

God Helmet, indeed.

(Biophotons are a mechanism for telepathy through the quantum entanglement of photons with the brain's biochemistry, a theory proposed by Indian chemist Dr. K. K. Paul.[83] It's now accepted science that photons can exist in an entangled [quantum] state, acting like identical twins that do everything in perfect synchronization.)

In another experiment, Persinger used a device to facilitate the telepathic transmission of images between test subjects, and while the results were less than spectacular, he said the technology was still in its infancy, comparing it to the early days of the telephone when transmission lines were noisy. The supposed telepathic images drawn by the test subjects are similarly noisy but do appear to show features of the target images.

The research of Persinger and others reportedly shows that electromagnetic fields like the ones produced by his God Helmet may be used to aid psychic functioning. The professor also discovered that electromagnetic disturbances in the atmosphere hinder them.[84] A noisy atmosphere correlated with decreased reports of psychic activity like telepathy and clairvoyance. A quiet atmosphere correlated with

increased reports—including reports of UFO sightings.

Apparently, you'll have better luck with your psychic abilities when it isn't thundering outside, but don't tell Hollywood—on television and in movies, thunderstorms go boom when fictional psychic feats are performed.

If you really want psychic fireworks, put Persinger's helmet on the head of a known psychic like Ingo Swann. Persinger did just that and observed the psychic's right brain hemisphere spike in the 7 hertz frequency while receiving mental images of a target. Are we seeing a pattern here? Right brain activity goes hand in hand with psychic functioning, and the 7 hertz frequency matches the Schumann resonance of 7.8 hertz pervading the Earth's atmosphere.

Dreaming of Telepathy

Persinger spoke frequently about the relationship between psychic functioning and dreaming. While both brain hemispheres are involved in the dreaming process, the right hemisphere takes the lead.[85] Persinger noted a close correlation between psychic functioning and dreaming.[86] It leads us to the phenomenon of dream telepathy and the Dream Laboratory at Maimonides Medical Center in Brooklyn, New York. The lab conducted thirteen studies in all, and the genesis of the project, the largest of its kind, came from psychiatrist Montague Ullman's observation that certain patients dreamed with spot-on accuracy about hidden aspects of their loved ones, colleagues, friends, and therapists, and their therapists, too, picked up information about their patients through dreams.

Following the same basic playbook as other telepathy studies, Maimonides researchers paired a sender and a receiver, with the receiver getting to sleep while hooked up to an EEG, and the sender staying up to broadcast. The action kicked off when the receiver entered the REM stage, prompting the sender to open a randomly chosen envelope containing a target image to mentally send to the receiver. Afterward, the awakened receiver reported what they were just dreaming about, and in the morning they reviewed a set of pictures that included the one used in the experiment. Did any remind them of their dreams? Independent judges scored the reports for how closely they matched the target.

Bear in mind, rarely do accurate hits exactly match the target image but instead get features right, and a dream is not a single image, like the ones used in other

telepathic studies; it's a series of images carrying personal and symbolic meaning.

Edgar Degas

One experimental trial used *The Dance Class* by Edgar Degas as the target image, chosen for its qualities of vivid color, dramatic content, and strong feeling. These qualities not only gave the sender something interesting to look at; they are also reported by people who reportedly experience telepathic dreams. That night, the receiver dreamed about being in a dance class with a half-dozen other people, in a place that felt like a school, and a little girl trying to dance with them. It scored an exact hit.

The lab recruited the Grateful Dead to test whether the emotional energy of their concerts could be harnessed to send imagery to the receiver. For six nights, as the band jammed at The Capitol Theater in Port Chester, New York, the audience of two thousand, with encouragement from the band, focused on sending an image displayed on a screen to the receiver at the Dream Lab forty-five miles away. Lead guitarist Jerry Garcia actually suggested the experiment. It is unknown how many people in the audience were tripping out at the time, but it was 1971, and the Grateful Dead was, well, the Grateful Dead. LSD and other hallucinogens

reportedly enhance psychic functioning.[87]

Appropriately, *The Seven Spinal Chakras* by the Armenian artist Scralian was a target image displayed.

Scralian

The receiver at the lab reported a dream about talking with a man floating in midair about capturing the energy of the sun in a box to store it (chakras are described as energy centers). A separate dream involved an energy box and the spinal column. Both are exact hits.[88]

Fast forward through 450 trials over ten years. A meta-analysis is conducted.

Envelope, please. And the winner is . . .

With an overall success rate of 63 percent versus a mean chance expectation of 50 percent, the analysis of all dream telepathy studies concluded that the odds against chance were 75 million to 1. It basically proves the existence of telepathic dreaming, but. . .

There's always a but.

But did the researchers measure telepathy, or was it some other psi functioning like clairvoyance? And were the judges truly blind—blind in the scientific sense; skeptics may have questioned if they were literally blind. And why did replications of the studies come up with weaker results? Probably because study participants reported from home rather than in a lab, where they could be awakened at just the right time, at the end of a REM stage, to recall what they were dreaming, the researchers say.

Without a doubt, the dream studies at Maimonides got the ball rolling, and dream telepathy continues to grab public interest. The number of times a show or movie has resolved a plot line because a dream reveals critical information at just the right time must number in the hundreds. The plot device works so well because many of us can recount times when a dream gave us uncannily accurate and prescient information. Mostly anecdotal, these stories are valuable as evidence of the phenomenon, but to make the case for dream telepathy we need better controls, so that's where we turn next.

It's a Bird, a Plane—Actually, It's a Tree!

Some wild reports of telepathic dreams come to us from the dream telepathy contest hosted annually by the International Association for the Study of Dreams (IASD). It gives participants the opportunity to follow protocols similar to those developed at Maimonides. Dr. Clare Johnson offers what may be the clearest hit in dream telepathy history. The experiment involved an image chosen at random from a set of four. A sender stayed awake deep into the night broadcasting it mentally. Participants wrote down their dreams in the morning, then were shown the four images and asked to pick the target. Clare says:

In my case, it began with a lucid dream [note: a lucid dream is one where the dreamer is aware they are dreaming] of a tree. But this was no ordinary lucid dream, and no ordinary tree.

It was the night of the 2004 IASD Dream Telepathy contest and my dreams were flooded with green. As I strolled through a dream park, I heard a woman's voice shouting the word 'TREE!' over and over. In the next dream, I met the telepathic sender, Beverly D'Urso, and lucidly asked her how transmitting the image was going. She told me she'd been shouting the word inside her head, and I remarked

that in my last dream someone had been shouting about trees. Just before I awoke I stood before a big, leafy tree.[89]

Manfred Antranias Zimmer

Guessing that the target image was a big, leafy tree doesn't prove you're psychic, but you are right. It's not an unusual image to dream about, but how do we explain Beverly, the telepathic sender, telling Clare in her dream what she was doing (broadcasting the target image) while awake? It's easy to say that this instance of telepathic communication between a dreaming person and an awake person must be something other than it appears to be, but experiments run by Karen Konkoly, a cognitive neuroscientist at Northwestern University, showed that scientists can communicate with people as they are dreaming, a proof-of-concept demonstration. Three other labs also ran successful experiments where a dreaming person proved they could hear questions by moving their eyeballs behind their eyelids (up, down, side to side) in response. For example, asked what one plus two equals, they'd respond by flicking their eyeballs upward three times.

The scientists and academics who study dream telepathy say it's probably a universal ability, but most people on most nights don't remember their dreams well enough to report the sort of detail needed for confirmation. Plus, while the IASD

experiments attempted to induce dream telepathy intentionally, it usually occurs spontaneously, adding to the challenge of replicability. Another issue that arises in these experiments is found in how dreams incorporate the imagery and sound into their content, like when a scientist asked a sleeping person to answer a simple math problem and that person reported dreaming about a voice coming from a radio asking math problems. But the biggest hurdle for researchers is in finding research participants who are adept enough at lucid dreaming.

Finding someone with Clare Johnson's accuracy at reporting the target image is exceptional, but the dream telepathy contest gave us other suggestive evidence of the phenomenon. One of the participants dreamed about coaching a group of boys on a green football field painted with white lines, and the image that corresponded with it showed a group of boys running on a green field painted with white lines. Problem was, the image was in the pool of four target images but not the one chosen for the contest.

With experimental controls in place, the research suggests that dream telepathy has been successfully demonstrated. But the best evidence is often uncovered in uncontrolled situations. Next, we take a look at a case from this author's personal files.

Telepathic Dreams in The Wild

We are being careful to explore paranormal phenomena through the lens of science, and that lens necessarily limits what's accepted as scientific. The first criteria is controlled conditions—without them, it leaves the door open to questioning and doubt. But rigid controls exclude what may be some of the most interesting evidence out there, such as Rochelle's case. She dreamed repeatedly and very accurately about an old friend. After years of no contact, and like a fly on the wall, in a succession of dreams spaced months apart, she found out facts about his life such as:

- He was engaged to be married.
- He and his future wife were going to have a baby.
- The name and gender of the baby.
- The baby's nickname.

Rochelle puzzled over the dreams, not knowing if they were true or just something her mind made up. Then she'd hear something through the grapevine that confirmed that her dreams had given her a bird's-eye view of her old friend and his new family. After it happened so many times, she stopped trying to write it off as coincidence and began to think it might be a telepathic connection. She felt no special need to catch up on news of his life, so why, like the audience in *The Truman Show*, were her dreams giving her the inside scoop about his life?

Rochelle learned how to identify the special dreams, the ones that started, ironically enough, as nothing special until suddenly everything changed. A force pulled her into a scene to watch her old friend go about his life as he made plans to get married, or talked with his future wife about names for the baby, or even just ate dinner and thought about ordinary aspects of daily life. The feeling of spying on him made her uneasy, but she also knew it was involuntary, and the dreams carried more vividness and clarity than her ordinary ones.

Then she had "the dream," the crown jewel of her months-long odyssey. In it, she walked a path next to a wide river while making small talk with her friend's future wife. Perfectly ordinary scene. She saw a steel girder bridge to one side spanning the river. To the other side she saw picnic areas, and a children's play area constructed to look like a fairy tale castle. She stopped and asked, "Where are we?" The future wife said, "Don't you know? We're in Kennewick."

Kennewick, Washington, at Columbia Park, a miles-long stretch of walking paths and picnic areas alongside the Columbia River. Thing is, until that moment Rochelle had never heard of Kennewick or Columbia Park, but when she looked it up online, she saw pictures that lined up exactly with what she had dreamed.

Was it telepathic?

Rochelle said it really felt like she was there in the park, and maybe she was sharing a bilocation experience with a woman she'd never met. Maybe she had really been there in the park, and in their home, and in their minds, and that's how she learned so much about their lives. You can hear her story on Episode 6 of the *Dreams That Shape Us* podcast.

Rochelle's experience fits a body of evidence supporting the existence of telepathic dreams, including ones that revealed unknown information. In the Red Barn Murder case, the mother of a murdered woman dreamed repeatedly about

where to find her body and who the killer was, and it turned out to be true. In 2023, the mother of Hong Kong celebrity Cai Tianfeng dreamed about information that repeated the feat. Killer caught.

Stay tuned for more ESP dreams. In the meantime, we'll continue combing through the research to look not just for evidence of telepathy, but also for theories that may explain it.

Telepathy is Natural

We think of telepathy as a "mental power," a feat of the cognitive mind. But to a biologist, telepathy comes from a deeper place built into the nervous system, interconnecting members of a species and serving an evolutionary purpose. Like the eight empaths from the Netflix series *Sense8*, we are stronger when united. It's the nature of life for all social species on this planet, and therefore we should look to biology to help us understand the phenomenon.

To a biologist like Rupert Sheldrake, telepathy is what makes a flock of starlings able to make sudden, coordinated shifts of direction that are too quick to occur just by watching each other.[90] It's what makes a pack of wolves able to range over hundreds of miles, sometimes venturing far apart in the hunt, then banding back together in new locations as if following a homing signal. In an eerie incident witnessed by biologist Dr. Susan Eirich, all thirty of the wolves at the sanctuary she managed began howling the very moment a senior pack member was euthanized out of sight. When elephant caretaker Lawrence Anthony died in March 2012, the two herds of elephants he had bonded with walked twelve hours to his home to pay their respects. His son reports that every year on March 2, the date of his passing, the elephants return. No one can explain how the elephants knew of his passing or when to return to pay their respects, but the most likely explanation that fits the evidence is it's telepathic.

Sheldrake is a pioneer in the world of biology. A graduate of Cambridge and Harvard, he proposed the theory of morphic resonance, a species-specific field of memory for storing and transmitting information between its members regardless of distances in time and space. It's similar to Carl Jung's theory of the collective unconscious, the collective memory of a species. Modeled after the theory of morphogenetic fields first proposed in the 1920s, it's based on the fact that

everything from the smallest one-celled organisms up to humans and beyond demonstrate abilities to self-organize, learn, and behave that can't be explained solely by biology or genetics or instincts or social influence. Sheldrake says:

The morphic fields of social groups connect together members of the group even when they are many miles apart, and provide channels of communication through which organisms can stay in touch at a distance. They help provide an explanation for telepathy. There is now good evidence that many species of animals are telepathic, and telepathy seems to be a normal means of animal communication, as discussed in my book *Dogs That Know When Their Owners Are Coming Home*. Telepathy is normal not paranormal, natural not supernatural, and is also common between people, especially people who know each other well.[91]

Sheldrake proposes the existence of morphic resonance between people and their animal companions, which to date is the only theory to explain the behavior of the elephants that showed up to mourn the passing of Mr. Martin. The biologist cites the case of Jaytee, a terrier that seemed to know the moment when Pamela Smart, its owner, had decided to return home. Jaytee would run to the window at the family home to await her return even though Pam was still miles away. Rupert and Pamela ruled out possibilities such as Jaytee being able to smell her coming (she was too far away and downwind), anticipate the time of return based on routine (she returned home at different times), or recognize the sound of her car (she returned in different cars, and even bicycled home on occasion).

To test the observations, they set up an experiment where Pam would leave the home and return when Rupert telephoned her from a separate location. Video cameras recorded the window where Jaytee was known to watch for her. When Pam was out and not on her way home, Jaytee would sit by the window 4 percent of the time. When Pam was on her way home, Jaytee would sit by the window 55 percent of the time. A replication study scored higher—Jaytee waited by the window 78 percent of the time.[92]

At the Duke lab, the Rhines and their daughter, Sally, documented cases where pets reacted to danger to their human companions before it materialized; reacted to the death of their companions from a distance; anticipated the return of their companions; homed in on distant targets; and traveled vast distances to new

locations after being separated from their humans.[93] The behavior has been observed not only in dogs but in cats, horses, and birds, too.

Speaking of birds, an experiment in animal-to-human telepathy used an African gray parrot trained to use human language, with a 1,500-word vocabulary. It spoke in sentences and understood context. Parrots are notorious mimics, though, like in the case where the parrot of owner Marty Durham, also an African gray, started saying "don't fucking shoot" after Marty was found shot to death in the home he shared with his wife Glenna (and subsequently she was convicted, though not because of the parrot's testimony). The research would need to be airtight. Sheldrake set up an experiment where the (first) parrot's owner opened envelopes containing pictures depicting words in its vocabulary. She'd focus on the pictures for two minutes. The experiment tested whether the parrot spoke the words associated with the pictures she was looking at. According to Sheldrake, it happened at odds far exceeding chance. Parrot owners know that their birds can say all sorts of crazy things at seemingly random times, but one time, as the owner looked at a photograph of a car's driver sticking their head out the window, the parrot said, "Uh oh, careful, you put your head out."

As the owner looked at a picture of an attractive couple wearing skimpy swimwear, the bird said, "Look at my pretty, naked body."

And once, as the owner checked out a photo of a girl, the bird said, "That's a girl."[94]

In another instance documented by the owner, she picked up the phone to call her friend Rob and the parrot said, "Hi, Rob." These were not everyday words and phrases for the bird.

Sheldrake's experiments are "out there," but it's to be expected when pioneering new territory in science. Armchair skeptics toss pithy criticisms at the research and his theories and label it "pseudoscience," but what we rarely hear from them are counter-theories to explain the observed effects. They just fall back on, "telepathy isn't possible." Why? Because according to their worldview, there is no way animals can telepathically pick up on the thoughts and intentions of other animals or their human companions, and vice-versa. End of story. Pseudo means "not genuine," and that can just as easily be said of their criticisms. Scientific consensus is a building process, and most scientists appreciate when their peers prove them wrong

—it moves the ball forward. They can use the criticism to reformulate their theories and strengthen their research.

Pseudo-criticism, on the other hand, parades itself as defending the good name of science and rationalism from heretics who don't even deserve to be called scientists, but is actually committing two cardinal sins by holding back progress and refusing to honestly evaluate the evidence. How much more genuine can we ask Sheldrake's science to be? Even if his theories are one day proven incorrect, he will go down in history for his bold innovations. And someone will come along and build atop his work and prove what's right about it. That's how science is supposed to work.

No Respect

Even if science can only show us so much, or ends up proving nothing, it's not the fault of the thing studied. Telepathy, like other aspects of the paranormal, may be just waiting for us to come up with the right approach before it reveals its secrets.

And ultimately, we may be standing in our own way, a victim of our rationality and long history of suppressing the things that we don't like or agree with, or that we fear. Historically, it hasn't been long since the Inquisition ended, where thousands of people were tortured and burned alive, some for displaying abilities or even being rumored to have abilities such as telepathy. We may have forced psychic abilities underground, and in psychological terms underground means deeply unconscious. Indeed, it's an act of courage to retrieve what's been lost in such a way.

Telepathy is now entering into the realm of technology, with devices coming out that are controlled mentally and facilitate mind-to-mind communication. They'll soon be in common use, and maybe the experience of interacting with other people that way will tear down the wall of belief about whether it's real. Apparently, it is real—and passing from the realm of sci-fi imagination to the here and now, showing once again that innovation is driven by first imagining what once seemed impossible.

Instead of a critic like Mr. Randi, maybe we should be paging Mr. Rodney Dangerfield, the comedian famous for saying he can't get no respect. That pretty much sums up the story about the science of telepathy and the paranormal in

general.

Some skeptics refute evidence even when it happens to them. Such is the case with Michael Schermer. On the night of his wedding, an old, nonfunctional transistor radio that once belonged to his wife's deceased grandfather started playing on its own, serenading the couple with love songs throughout the night. It stopped working the next morning and never worked again. He says it's "anomalous" but not paranormal.[95] His wife took it as a sign that her beloved grandfather was there in spirit for her special day. He ends his account with words to the wise that everyone should hear:

The emotional interpretations of such anomalous events grant them significance regardless of their causal account. And if we are to take seriously the scientific credo to keep an open mind and remain agnostic when the evidence is indecisive or the riddle unsolved, we should not shut the doors of perception when they may be opened to us to marvel in the mysterious.

CHAPTER 3

REINCARNATION, SPIRITS, AND THE AFTERLIFE

Jeffrey Keene is not the type of person to believe something just because you tell him it's true. As a firefighter who rose to the level of fire chief, his job made it dangerous for him to deal in anything other than the known, the factual, and the provable. A raging fire is an inescapable fact, and Keene felt the full weight of responsibility for getting people out alive. By all accounts, he was very good at his job and performed it with appropriate seriousness.

So, you can imagine his surprise when this resident of Connecticut, raised as a Christian, who never thought much about reincarnation, discovered its personal reality. And it may come as a surprise to find out that science has given us compelling evidence to think reincarnation is a fact.

Jeffrey Keene knew none of this at the time, just that something knocked the breath out of him while he was touring the Civil War battlefield at Antietam. Come to find out, he'd walked across the same ground where one hundred and two-score years earlier, during a past life as General John B. Gordan, he was nearly killed by a bullet that ripped through the left side of his face. The tour set into motion a remarkable series of events that climaxed with Jeffrey looking into the mirror and realizing that he and Gordan were the same man born 150 years apart.

The resemblance between the two men is uncanny, and there are other remarkable similarities between them that Jeffrey spells out in his book, *Fire in the Soul*,[96] but it doesn't prove reincarnation. We'll need evidence that meets the standards of science. We also must be wary of evidence gathered through hypnosis, a common means of gaining information about alleged past life incarnations. Which is what makes Jeffrey's case so interesting: his recall of his life as John Gordon

happened spontaneously, yet an uncanny series of synchronous events put him at the right place at the right time to be thunderstruck at Antietam, as if some invisible force orchestrated everything to lead to that moment of revelation.

Jeffrey Keene

Hypnosis is notoriously unreliable, so to make a case for reincarnation, a reliable means of gathering and testing data is required. Reincarnation researchers created solid methodologies and protocols, and now, after thousands of case studies, we can look through the data and see the trends: birthmarks on the body that correlate with injuries sustained during a past life; features of personality, character, and intellect that carry over from lifetime to lifetime; recognition of people and places known in a past life; memories of events from before a person was born; unusually quick development of skills and talents related to a past incarnation; phobias related to how a person died; and even the spontaneous ability to speak foreign languages.

Those criteria for scientifically studying reincarnation were developed by Ian Stevenson, a pioneering professor of psychiatry and division head at the University of Virginia for fifty years.

Dr. Stevenson meticulously coded and cataloged the data he gathered while traveling the world in pursuit of the best evidence for reincarnation. Dr. Jim Tucker, also a professor of psychiatry at the same university, followed in his footsteps, and together with other researchers they produced enough data to make the case that

reincarnation is a fact of life. But can we safely say there really is something to their scientific discoveries about reincarnation? Let's find out.

A Little Child Shall Lead Them

Young children are the focus of the bulk of the case studies into past lives. The data show that between the ages of two and five they may start talking about being a person who died before they were born, and what they say is startlingly accurate in some cases. Stevenson and Tucker solved more than 1,700 cases by using the information to track down who those children were in a past life. Let's look at a famous case investigated by Dr. Tucker and see if it holds up to scrutiny.

At the age of two, little James Leininger started having nightmares about dying in a fiery airplane crash. He saw himself as a fighter pilot, and an enemy plane with a red sun emblazoned on its side shot him down. Terrified, he'd scream out, "Airplane crash! On fire! Little man can't get out!" It puzzled his mom, because James knew nothing about World War II or the emblem of Imperial Japan, the red sun. But one thing for sure, the boy loved everything about airplanes, despite his nightmares.

It gets weirder. By age three, James began doing "preflight checks" on his toys. He corrected his mom that the cylinder on the bottom of the plane was a drop tank, not a bomb. Then he started telling his parents that the plane he'd flown in the war was a Corsair, and it took off from a boat known as the Natoma. It had been shot in the engine and crashed in the water. He remembered the first and last name of a friend and fellow pilot, Jack Larsen, and that the Corsair's tires would go flat while landing on the boat. At home, James looked at a book about the battle of Iwo Jima bought by his father well after he started talking about historic planes and battles, pointed to a picture of the main island, and said, "That's where my plane got shot down."

His parents already suspected that their boy may have been relating memories of a past life, and the new information gave them much to check out. And most of it did.

During the war in the Pacific, the US operated an escort carrier called *Natoma Bay*, referred to as *the Natoma*. It carried Corsairs, which were known to bounce when landing on the flight deck and the tires would go flat. A pilot named Jack

Larsen had been assigned to the ship, and only one of its fighter pilots had died in combat, James Huston Jr., Larsen's good friend. Huston died when his plane was shot in the engine by a Japanese pilot, caught fire, and crashed near the main island during the battle of Iwo Jima in 1945. By then, the Corsairs had been replaced by more advanced fighters, but Huston did fly the Corsair at one point. And it all happened fifty years before little James was born.

Was James Leininger remembering his past life as James Huston?

Dr. Tucker thinks so, but only after considering alternative theories.[97] The parents published a book about their son's past life, and their story was featured on ABC News's *Strange Mysteries*, giving critics ammunition to say they must be perpetuating a hoax for financial gain. Tucker finds it unlikely considering the uncertainties of a book deal, the ten-year length of time for keeping up a hoax until the book was published, the dangers of estranging family and friends if exposed, and his assessment of the family's truthfulness after several hours of interviewing them. Tucker is a child psychiatrist trained to know when a child is lying or repeating what they're told.

Tucker also doubts that the supposed past-life memories were a child's fantasy triggered by a trip James took with his father to a flight museum, because it was a positive experience and the subsequent nightmares were traumatic. And while the parents' involvement in tracking down details that led the researchers to the name James Huston Jr. raises suspicions that they fed their young son the story, Tucker authenticated documentation of the boy's statements and behaviors before the family knew anything about Huston. No published information could be found about Huston before little James started talking about him, and neither were there any mentions of the *Natoma* in popular media.

If it's not a case of reincarnation or mistaken identity, then what is it?

Explaining Reincarnation

Some scientists can accept the evidence for reincarnation gathered by Stevenson and other researchers without jumping to the conclusion that it proves reincarnation. Under one theory, a person's memories are stored in a "memory pool," a collective memory storehouse similar to the morphic field concept espoused by Rupert Sheldrake. The memories may survive death and transfer to a young child, who then

reports them as their own. Powerful emotions create an imprint of memory, which may explain why the data show that a violent or traumatic death may lead to a quick reincarnation. Though in the case of James Leininger, five decades passed before he was "born again."

Similar theories about memory transfer are used to explain cases of spirit possession and split personality. A memory packet downloads like software into the mind of a recipient, who then may assume personality characteristics of the original person. Indeed, there are documented cases of altered personalities related to past incarnations emerging in the living. Fascinating research related to organ transplants shows that recipients may start behaving in ways like the donor. There's also the automatism phenomenon where a person's body is animated, beyond their conscious control, by unconscious drives and psychological complexes, but as an alternative theory for reincarnation it falls apart in the face of evidence like the transmission of birthmarks and bodily defects from one incarnation to another, noted in 20 percent of past life cases.

Dr. Kurt Gray, a psychologist at the University of North Carolina, says that our minds can generate a model of another person's mind. The next step for creating an alternative theory to reincarnation is to explain the mechanism of transfer from one mind to another after death. Materialist theory says it's impossible—memory perishes with the individual—but memory models persist. Gray, in fact, "channeled" his mentor's personality to complete a book they were writing together when he died, and he said it was like an ongoing mental conversation with his deceased friend. Spirit mediums using automatic writing have penned entire series of books supposedly communicated to them by deceased people. It may sound like baloney, but researchers say the writing is full of what appears to be the memories and personality of the deceased.

Memory could continue to exist after death in what Pierre de Chardin called the Noosphere, a collective consciousness of all humanity. Or it exists permanently in the collective unconscious, where personalities live eternally in a shared layer of the unconscious mind, according to Carl Jung. The mechanism for transfer may come through what Drs. Brendan Engen and Jeffrey Mishlove call Archetypal Synchronistic Resonance, a theory that the archetypes of the collective unconscious act as a bridge between certain dead individuals and certain living ones, with

personal resonance being their connector. Under this theory, a case like James Leininger's could be explained as one of personal resonance between him and James Huston, such as their shared love of flying. In the paper published by Misholve and Engen, they describe a series of synchronous events that led them to believe they may be the reincarnations of the Roman stoic philosopher Seneca and one of his students, respectively.[98] Or, alternatively, there's something about Seneca and his student that resonates personally with Mishlove and Engen, and it's due to something other than reincarnation.

Dr. Tucker thinks quantum physics might have something to do with it. At the subatomic level, the world is made of energy, as are people. Energy can neither be created nor destroyed, it can only change states. It makes theoretical room for human consciousness to leave behind an energy residue or pattern after death that can transfer to the living, especially at an impressionable age.

The holographic principle gives us another interesting way of understanding the transfer of memory in cases documented by reincarnation researchers. It's a theory in physics that the three-dimension physical world is like a holographic projection of information encoded on a two-dimensional surface at the outer boundaries of the universe. Everything inside those boundaries is a holographic rendering of that 2-D information. Physicist David Bohm said the holographic principle solves not only many of the paradoxes of quantum physics but also explains the mechanisms behind phenomena such as telepathy and near-death experience. To Bohm, the entire universe is interconnected, and, like a hologram, the information about the whole is found in each of its parts.

Theoretically, then, a human being contains the entire universe within them, and accessing it through their consciousness is an inner journey to cross the boundaries between realities. Information such as the memories and memory structures of everyone who has ever lived is accessible simply by wanting to know it. Interestingly, the research literature is full of reports of near-death experiences with the person feeling a cosmic oneness and accessing anything they wanted to know after crossing over the boundary of death.

Bohm's theory about the holographic universe piggybacks on an ancient concept known as the Akashic Records, meaning "that which holds all" in Sanskrit, one of the world's oldest languages, and "all" means not only all the events of our world

and the deeds of humankind, but also the thoughts, emotions, and intentions of everyone who's ever lived.

If reincarnation can't be proven in the first place, none of it matters as far as mainstream science is concerned. The researchers who study reincarnation say the strongest evidence comes from verifiable statements made by young children about their previous earthly incarnations. The details the children give are the predictions that can be proven correct or incorrect through the methods of science. With 1,700 proven cases of reincarnation and counting, the researchers did their job.

For instance, Ian Stevenson looked into statements made by a young girl in Sri Lanka who recalled memories of a past life in a town that was unknown to the family at the time. She remembered her "other" family, their home, their neighbors, and her cause of death, making thirty statements in all. Stevenson authenticated twenty-seven of them.[99] The odds of it being a fluke that a young girl could make so many accurate statements must be very low, unless of course we fall back on the skeptical argument that it's either a fluke or a fallacy.

Making predictions and verifying or falsifying them is a cornerstone of the scientific method, and we have several thousand case studies from all over the world published in academic journals and books starting in 1960. All told, the correct predictions must number in the tens of thousands, though there are plenty of incorrect and unverifiable ones, too. It makes the argument that reincarnation is the more likely explanation than the alternatives such as wishful thinking, hoaxes, and duped investigators, at least in some cases.[100]

However, the argument against this line of research is the interpretative nature of matching the statements with details about a past life. Kids say all sorts of crazy things, and the researchers might be prone to confirmation bias. Also, there's only so much you can do as an investigator when you come onto a scene after the fact to document evidence and interview witnesses. But the research is said to be strong enough to hold up in court, especially if we take only the strongest cases where multiple witnesses vouch for the accuracy and integrity of the people involved.

Take only the case studies that pass the highest standards, where the quality and number of correct predictions are too numerous to write off as chance, and researchers can make the case that the phenomenon exists. It only takes one validated case to prove it. It's safe to say that while reincarnation is not and can

never be absolutely proven in the way that the mainstream wants, neither can it be disproven, and in science it's just as important to disprove as it is to prove. As for the quality of the research, specifically of Jim Tucker's, we have Dr. Michael Levin, a distinguished scholar at Tufts University, describing it as "first-rate."[101] Numerous high-level academics hold the same opinion.

To others it's all nonsense, and opening that door leaves room for all sorts of wacky claims to slip through. These mainstream scientists will only be convinced when a testable explanation for reincarnation comes along that shows exactly how it works, but we can only make educated guesses at this point in our understanding. It's hard to quantify some of the more uncanny cases, and some of the research into them conveys an air of "you'd have to have been there to believe it." Like in a case investigated by German therapist Trutz Hardo, reported by Dr. Eli Lasch, an Israeli physician. Lasch claimed to have accompanied a young boy and his family as they searched to find where he'd lived and died in a past life—he remembered being murdered by ax blows to the head. The boy recognized the village he'd lived in when they came to it, then he led them to his past home. He remembered his full name, and it was recognized as a man who'd lived there and gone missing years earlier. The boy then led them to his murderer. When confronted, that man was said to turn white as a sheet but deny involvement. By then a large crowd had gathered, and the boy took them to a secret grave. They uncovered a skeleton, its skull cracked, and the ax buried nearby. The murderer then confessed.

Is it a fluke? Or maybe, as critics have said, Dr. Lasch made it all up. He died without leaving a paper trail, and that's a problem. Once again, we can neither prove nor disprove reincarnation through a case such as this one. Proving reincarnation would change our understanding of what we are as human beings and fundamentally reorder how we live in this world. If reincarnation could be proven without necessarily having to accept the existence of God, the gatekeepers of science might be more open to accepting the evidence and concede that it at least warrants further investigation.

After all this teasing with fascinating cases and plausible theories that might finally answer the question about eternal life, this author wishes he could offer you incontrovertible evidence. What you've read so far is the proverbial scratching away at the surface of everything that's out there, except for one case that might just

prove once and for all that something "there" is there, something we really should give our deepest consideration. It's the case of a premier homicide detective who, in a way, investigated his own death.

Following Tracks Through Time

Bob Snow is a no-nonsense, "just the facts" homicide investigator in Indianapolis who at one time might have laughed out loud at belief in reincarnation. Bob saw himself as a hardcore rationalist with a "prove it" mantra that made him very good at his job, so good that he rose to the rank of police captain. Then he took a dare to undergo a past life hypnotic regression. It flipped his life and all he thought he knew upside down. We said earlier that hypnosis is unreliable, but just wait till you hear how detective Bob Snow convinced himself, by investigating the evidence, that something he thought impossible was actually real.

The story begins with Detective Snow chatting socially with a police psychologist. She asks if he's heard of past life regression hypnosis. Don't get him started—it's all garbage. She then says slyly, "Why don't you find out for yourself? Detectives seek the truth, right?" He couldn't say no. The decorated police veteran who'd investigated thousands of crimes and survived life-threatening situations would not be one-upped by the diminutive psychologist. Not Bob Snow, the chief homicide detective who graduated top of his class. He agreed to do it.

On second thought, what a waste of time. No way.

But then he'd run into the psychologist and she'd ask if he'd undergone a regression session. No, he'd say, but soon he would . . . knowing there was no chance he'd follow through. Then he'd run into her *again*. It seemed that something wanted him to do the session because their paths kept crossing. Her persistence paid off, and he eventually scheduled the session.

Bob showed up at the session (with a different psychologist) convinced there was no way he could be hypnotized. One thing about being right most of the time in matters of life and death is it can make a person a bit too sure. He admits to being sure there was nothing to so-called past lives. Not only was he wrong about that, but he was also wrong about hypnosis. He remembered everything that happened during his session and remained aware physically while going to another place mentally. Regression hypnosis is imaginative, and that's the holdup for many people—they

equate imagination with fantasy. Fantasy is for children. Adults deal with reality. Murder is reality, and proving who did it boils down to hard truth.

Bob rolled with it despite his doubts, and while under hypnosis he saw a past life as an artist. He sensed his financial struggles and the friction it caused in his marriage. Oh, how he hated painting portraits only because he needed the money! He adored his wife, and she died of a blood clot. They never had children. Bob's name was Jack in that life, and when he died, his soul rose up out of a big city full of tall buildings and blazing lights.

All in all, during his session he made twenty-eight statements that could be verified or not. Disprove even one, and he'd prove the police psychologist wrong about reincarnation. All he had to do was find the painting of the female hunchback he vividly remembered creating during a life as an artist named Jack.

Bob put his detective skills to work, but after going through every art book in the library he still hadn't found the painting, so he called every art dealer in the phone book. He didn't even know if the painting was real, just that it had been an incredibly vivid image he saw while under hypnosis, and he knew it like the back of his hand, as if painted by *his* hand. He didn't want to give up, but his case grew cold. After months of searching, this Jack character and his painting of a hunchback were nowhere to be found.

His wedding anniversary with his wife came around, and they celebrated in New Orleans, a place they'd never been to. On the final day of their trip, they decided to check out the art galleries and antique shops in the French Quarter. While she looked at modern art, Bob wandered off. Then, after rounding a corner in a small shop, he found it: the portrait of a hunchback woman. Not any woman—*the* woman. The very painting he'd almost given up searching for.

Like touching a live electrical wire, is how Bob described the moment he laid eyes on the painting. Absolutely dumbstruck. An obscure American artist named J. Carroll Beckwith did the painting, and everything about the situation would have lined up perfectly with what Bob saw during the regression session, except that J. stood for James, not Jack. That information didn't square, but Bob tracked down Beckwith's diaries, read all seventeen thousand pages, and learned that James Carroll Beckwith preferred to be called Jack. Jack loved being an artist and resorted to painting portraits to make ends meet, which he hated doing. He struggled

financially and it was a source of friction in his marriage, but he adored his wife. They never had children. She died of a blood clot, and he died later in New York, a big city full of tall buildings and blazing lights.

Detective Snow verified twenty-seven out of twenty-eight details gained from hypnosis about his past life,[102] going to extraordinary lengths to disprove any of it, even thinking that maybe he'd seen the painting of the hunchback in an art book and that's what triggered his memory when he saw the painting in the New Orleans art gallery. But no, the painting had been in private hands and only recently placed for sale. Bob knew from experience that 1 percent of his homicide cases turned out to be something unexpected—for example, a suicide or accidental death that looked at first like a murder—and if he just kept investigating, he'd solve the case of his supposed past life by explaining it conventionally.

The synchronicities that occurred during his journey seemed to lead Bob on a breadcrumb trail, which implies that *something* was leaving the clues and hoping he'd follow. Numerous times, hitting dead ends forced him to try harder and dig deeper, and by doing so the trail would lead to unexpected places. Like Dorothy following the yellow brick road to Oz, everything fell into place perfectly so that he could see behind the curtain at exactly the right time. As if something—call it God, or the higher self, or the Trickster—knew how to craft the experience so that the big truth reveal would shatter all resistance. And that's what happened to detective Bob Snow when he laid eyes on the painting he made during a past life as James Beckwith.

The literature about past lives is full of stories about other amazing synchronicities that seem too good to be true. In psychiatrist Dr. Brian Weiss's book *Only Love Is Real,* he recounts the case where two of his patients, totally unknown to each other, described past lives while under hypnosis that matched up perfectly, convincing the psychiatrist that eons ago they'd been siblings. The first stroke of fate brought them to Brian at around the same time. The second stroke placed them next to each other on the same airplane several months after it all began. Turbulence made the flight bumpy and prompted them to unconsciously reach out and touch hands, and with it came the same head-to-toe shock of recognition that Bob Snow felt when he saw the hunchback painting, and Jeffrey Keene felt at Antietam when his feet touched the same ground where he'd walked and nearly died as General

Gordon. Synchronicity is the theory by Carl Jung and Nobel laureate Wolfgang Pauli that some coincidences are meaningful. They are triggered by events that connect a person's internal and external reality, and the theory is the best we have to explain how events can line up like that, if you can accept their premise that mind and matter originate from the source and are thus two ends of the same spectrum.

Dr. Weiss ruled out conventional reasons for how his two patients told stories under hypnosis that lined up so well, namely that he manipulated suggestible people to say what he wanted to hear. Of course, a strong argument can be made that when people want to believe something, they will ignore evidence to the contrary. It's the same vulnerability exploited by con artists and stage magicians. A lot of what we find in accounts about past lives reads like fiction, too good to be true, and by those standards detective Bob Snow's story does as well, but he swears by every word.

Scientifically, by themselves these accounts are not absolute proof. Even with the quality of an observer like Detective Snow, the best we can say is it's proof enough for him and those who believe him. Dr. Weiss also encountered proof that was good enough for him—so good, he weathered the backlash from his colleagues in psychiatry when he started talking about his clinical discoveries. Jeffrey Keene found proof when he looked in the mirror and saw the uncanny resemblance to General Gordon. An argument is made that the odds of all these people fooling themselves or being fooled are astronomically low, but the counterargument claims that the reasoning is a trap. It's how snake oil salesmen work: *look at everyone else who bought a bottle!*

But viewed in light of the synchronicities linking together meaningful events, it suggests that something more is going on. Is it really a coincidence that Bob Snow walked into that small art store and just happened to find the painting he'd been searching for, or that Brian Weiss's patients just happened to end up seated next to each other on a plane? To Jung, it's evidence of a unifying consciousness in the universe reflecting the deep contents of the psyche and orchestrating events around their personal meaning. To Mishlove and Engen, it's a person's inner life resonating out into the world and activating the mysterious power of the archetypes. To quantum theorists on the bleeding edge, synchronicity and reincarnation are the natural results of living in a universe where everything is entangled and like attracts like.

But to neuroscientists, synchronicity is merely the mind searching for causal explanations for extraordinary coincidences. To probability theorists, if there's any chance of something happening, no matter how remote, odds are it will eventually. For reincarnation, we can only say that it is the most apparent explanation for an effect that shows up around the world in the most uncanny ways.

Mainstream science might be more willing to help prove or disprove reincarnation if not for the poison pill found in its biggest implication: the survival of consciousness after death. The field of psychical research was originally created to answer that question but opened a rift in the scientific community that never healed. Belief in reincarnation means belief in life after death, but even arguing that what survives death is just a complex of memory or constellation of personality traits might only peel away a few of the undecided by explaining reincarnation without a hint of religious belief. Nothing short of an act of God—figuratively, of course—is going to budge the consensus opinion in the scientific community, especially among atheists.

See the problem here?

Prove the existence of an afterlife and it not only makes reincarnation possible, it also changes how we understand life itself. But how is it possible? And how do we leave God, the ultimate unprovable, out of the equation?

First, we need a solid argument in favor of the survival of consciousness, and to that end billionaire space entrepreneur Robert Bigelow spent $1.8 million in contest money to attract contributions from the most knowledgeable people to prove it by giving supporting evidence. Bigelow's group heard from scientists, philosophers, spiritual practitioners, and others from around the globe. From Windbridge Institute, where scientists test spirit mediums under controlled conditions and publish papers. From doctors who investigate near death experiences. And from Jeffrey Mishlove, the parapsychologist who was told by a well-known psychic that he'd once lived a life as the Roman philosopher, Seneca. Mishlove won the contest and a $500,000 cash prize after the panel of judges deemed that he gave the best evidence, and it's no wonder; he's interviewed more high-level academics, scientists, and authors about the nature of consciousness and related topics than any other person alive. Mishlove presented evidence from sources of study and research as varied as spirit mediumship, near-death experience (NDE), after-death communications (ADC), and

reincarnation studies. He applied Occam's Razor to the question of survival of consciousness: which explanation has the fewest assumptions that can account for all the facts? If you are willing to accept the evidence he presents, then the survival of consciousness is that explanation. Then he used the "white crow argument": in the same way that proving the existence of just one white crow nullifies the argument that all crows are black, proving any one of his arguments nullifies the argument against the survival of consciousness.

Without a doubt, Dr. Mishlove, the only academic to ever be awarded a PhD in parapsychology by a major institution (UC Berkeley), put together an ingenious case for the survival of consciousness. Let's take a look at some of the evidence he presents.

Talkative Ghosts

The character Cole Sear in the movie *The Sixth Sense* famously said, "I talk to dead people," and so do spirit mediums, supposedly. We say "supposedly" because there's seemingly no way to prove their claims, but we can test the veracity of what they say, and scientists have been doing that for the past 150 years. Among the most famous mediums who went through rigorous testing is Leonora Piper. She channeled the spirit of George Pellew, a lawyer who didn't believe in life after death. George had told his friend Richard Hodgson, a psychical researcher known for his debunking skills, that if he could return after death to communicate with the living he'd be sure to make things lively. Apparently, he did, convincing twenty-nine of his family and friends, including Richard, that it really was him talking through the medium, Leonora. He identified people in the room who were unknown to her and gave veridical details about their history and specific events from their lives together.

Let's see Cole try to duplicate that feat!

Speaking through Leonora, Pellew identified and gave the history of items carried out of sight in the pockets of people in the room, and referred to mutual friends who did not participate and were unknown to the medium. Observers of these psychic feats included some of science's biggest names.[103] Pellew, or whatever spirit showed up that day, gave details about deceased family members related to people present, such as their physical descriptions and peculiarities, talents

and abilities, and personal likes and dislikes, and it carried on over the course of hundreds of sittings (the term for a session with a medium; the client is the "sitter"). The medium hit the nail on the head too often to be a fluke, argued her supporters in the scientific community, while detractors pointed to what she got wrong. Some accused her of cold reading, but others ruled it out based on the impossibility of knowing specific, obscure facts about the deceased and the sitters. Cold reading is easy to spot once the tricks of the trade are learned. Some of the early investigators were probably conned, but they caught on and tightened their controls.

Piper practiced what's known as evidential mediumship, giving evidence in support of her claims to be in contact with the afterlife. She offered specific details about the deceased, including full names and exact dates for births, deaths, weddings, on so on. Skeptics would show up determined to prove her wrong and walk away astounded, though some questioned whether Leonora read minds rather than talked to spirits, known as the *living agent psi hypothesis* (in other words, Leonora's own psychic abilities were the source of the information that supposedly came through discarnate entities). She was even secretly followed by detectives to see if she was researching the people who would be coming for future sessions. No fraud or deception were ever uncovered.

After twenty-five years of research, the evidence about Leonora's mediumship convinced a great many rational people, and quite a few others accused her of fraud. Piper herself said she didn't know how she produced the astounding information while in trance, but she couldn't rule out telepathy, and neither could some of the researchers who were convinced of her mediumship abilities.[104] Leonora's case is one of the top ones cited by Mishlove. The mass of supporting evidence and the quality of the scientists who presented it make a strong case, but the involvement of William James, the founder of Harvard's psychology department and a giant in academia at the time, iced the cake for Jeffrey. James extensively studied Leonora and did his due diligence, and if you trust his judgment, then her case is truly compelling.

Gladys Osborne Leonard duplicated many of Piper's feats, and in one baffling case she channeled information from a deceased son to his mother. Through Leonard, he told her to search his wallet for a check stub because she was going to need it. Not long after, when debt collectors showed up at her door, she produced

the stub, proving the debt had been paid. It's the sort of "unknown unknown" that rules out not only trickery but also mind reading—Gladys couldn't read what was unknown to the minds of the people present, so how could she know anything about the debt collectors or the check stub?

The scientists of the time debated these questions vigorously, because obviously mediums like Leonard and Piper were right too often in matters they had no possible way of knowing about. In the history of the study of ADC, we find predictions about upcoming pregnancies, births, and deaths, and about medical conditions that hadn't yet materialized, all unknowns. A graduate student studied Gladys for nine years for his PhD dissertation, collecting hundreds of specific details and verifying 92 percent of them. Critics argue that the mediums' statements are often so general they could apply to many different instances. Specific statements are harder to wave away, though, and the argument against usually boils down to, you guessed it: it must be fraud.

We could literally go on all day about the verified evidence and cases where mediums gave information leading to scientific discoveries, solving crimes, healing illnesses, locating lost people and items, and changed lives. But because hypnotic states are sometimes involved and experiments have proven that people under hypnosis can perform amazing feats, there's room for doubt. Never mind that some mediums give their eerily accurate information while fully conscious.

In the end, we can't prove the survival of consciousness through the study of mediumship alone—some sort of ESP could be involved. However, spirit visitations by the recently deceased are reported around the world, including numerous cases of full body apparitions corroborated in some cases by multiple witnesses and accompanied by miracles such as spontaneous healings. In the book *Phantasms of the Living*, three early prominent psychical researchers reviewed more than seven hundred reports of spirit visitations that often occurred at or around the time of death, and found many of the reports to be believable and corroborated. Mishlove relates the story of his uncle visiting him in a dream before learning that the man had just passed away. Convinced that his uncle's spirit really did visit him, the experience profoundly influenced the direction he took in life. It's what led him to switch his field of study from criminology to parapsychology.

Then we have cases of physical mediumship where objects materialize out of

thin air and move on their own. Even weirder is ectoplasm, depicted in *Ghostbusters* as oozing slime. It's been witnessed emitting like a gas from the bodies of mediums and congealing into recognizable forms. Leslie Kean, an investigative journalist for various publications including the *New York Times*, witnessed a medium produce ectoplasm from their body which then formed into a disembodied hand that she touched. Some researchers claim it's an externalization of protoplasm, and others that it's an externalization of disturbances in the medium's psyche, but speculation is all we have because the substance dissolves quickly. Numerous photos, videos, and plaster molds exist, however. Kean authored the book *Surviving Death: A Journalist Investigates Evidence for an Afterlife*. She is the same journalist who broke the story of the Pentagon's secret program to study UAPs. She is a credible witness.

It sounds like something dreamed up by Hollywood, and for that reason plus the cloud of suspicion created by known hoaxes, the public is generally skeptical about ADC, and mainstream scientists more so. Debunkers like Harry Houdini claimed to have exposed famous mediums as frauds, but dig past the headlines and you find other credible witnesses who were in the same room during the alleged hoaxes and gave very different stories. During Spiritualism's heyday around the turn of the twentieth century, scientists spent several hundreds of hours observing seances. The list includes distinguished scholars, university department heads, and Nobel laureates whose experiences convinced them that human consciousness survives physical death.

Form an opinion based on general consensus, and you might think that mediumship has been debunked. Untrue. To the contrary, the modern study of mediumship not only accepts the evidence but is producing it under increasingly stringent conditions, and for those scientists the question comes down to whether mediums are talking with discarnate human entities, or using ESP or PK. Julie Beischel, a PhD research scientist at Windbridge Institute, has been studying mediumship since the mid-2000s, She favors the "discarnate human entity" argument over the alternatives because it's what the evidence says.[105]

Beischel's experiments use multiple levels of blinding to prevent the possibility of fraud, leakage, and other reasons why mediumship studies may be discounted scientifically. Experiments are done over the phone to prevent cold reading and

other means of guessing information about the target, the sitter. The medium doesn't know anything about the sitter or the deceased person, so there's no possibility for "hot reading," i.e. using prior information gained to create the appearance of mediumship. An experimenter serves as a proxy while on the phone with the medium, preventing the possibility that the sitter's reaction to the information could cue the medium. The target and the deceased are unknown to the proxy, and the medium answers five specific questions about each of two targets: their appearance, personality, interests or activities, manner of death, and the messages they want to communicate to the sitter. The sitter then picks which reading they think is most accurate, eliminating the rater bias found in past mediumship studies.

Under such blinded conditions, the success rate should be around fifty-fifty by chance, but Beischel's experiments succeeded two-thirds of the time. Assuming the experiments do in fact make the case that the information obtained by the mediums is anomalous, which is academic-speak for paranormal, is it due to communicating with the deceased, or to psychic reading? Both have worked in other studies as a means of gaining such information. Beischel asked the mediums about the differences and reported that they said psychic reading is like reading information from a book, whereas communication with the deceased is like having a conversation. Beischel concludes that the best explanation for the source of the medium's information is that they really are talking with dead people.

The protocols take into account criticisms of past mediumship experiments like those by Dr. Gary Schwartz, documented in his book *The Afterlife Experiments*. The question for science when considering the evidence in support of an extraordinary claim is whether something extraordinary shows up in the data collected, and whether the data can be trusted. The mediumship studies don't offer proof to the satisfaction of the scientific establishment. Certainly, some spectacular individual hits were scored, including a correct prediction about the coming death of a loved one, but the way the evidence is collected is deemed too subjective. Critic Ray Hyman won't accept the validity of the research in part because too many times during his youthful days as a palm reader he saw how easy it was to get people to play along and bias themselves. One time as a reader, he decided to say the opposite of what he really thought and got the same "Oh my God, you're so right" reaction from his clients. The research is fatally flawed because of the human factor, say

critics, but the researchers on hand for the sittings, then and now, are generally convinced enough to put their scientific reputation behind it.

Modern studies are using EEG and other technology to see inside the brain as a medium attempts contact with a discarnate entity, and the results show noticeable differences in brain activity when the medium makes contact compared to when they are imagining it happen or in a resting state. Higher than normal amounts of activity in the gamma and beta frequency bands have been measured, suggesting that high frequency brain activity is associated with true mediumship.[106] The authors of the study also note that better results are obtained from mediums who had passed previous testing of their ability, compared with participants who hadn't been tested.

The next pillar in the case for the survival of consciousness doesn't suffer from the same inability to prove through research. It's a phenomenon that happens right under the noses of, and sometimes directly to, doctors in medical settings, and after decades of recalcitrance the medical community is now taking the findings more seriously. Near-death experience (NDE) is the phenomenon, and the evidence for it is strong.

Near-Death Experience (NDE)

Some people die and their existence continues, and they can see and hear everything going on at the scene of their death, but usually the living can't see or hear them. They pop out of their body and begin their journey to what's described in the research as "new dimensions of reality." Some go through a tunnel of light; most are greeted at death's door by their dearly departed loved ones or other spiritual figures; and all are deeply affected by the experience. It's not just surviving death that transforms them—it's the experience of knowing without a doubt that life continues. Many atheists turned into believers of the afterlife after an NDE, and many of the most prominent names in the study of NDEs are physicians who experienced it themselves and, try as they might, couldn't explain it through conventional science.

Around 750 people are resuscitated per day, and one out of five of them report experiences that satisfy the criteria for an NDE on the Greyson NDE Scale, named after its creator psychiatrist Bruce Greyson. He took interest in NDEs after a patient told him things she couldn't have known because they happened while she was

unconscious. She knew that Bruce had talked with her roommate, that the conversation had taken place down the hall from her hospital room, and that he'd concealed a splotch of spaghetti sauce on his tie beneath his white lab coat. Pioneering research during the 1970s and '80s gave us not only irrefutable data, but also veridical evidence of the kind that caught Greyon's attention. Published research has given us numerous cases where NDE experiencers (NDErs) reported exact details of what happened at their resuscitation: what was said, who was there, the instruments used, and procedures done. One man even knew where to find the dentures his ER team lost while resuscitating him, and in another case, a woman who came back from the dead told the hospital staff about a colorful gym shoe on a ledge outside a window on the other side of the hospital. She saw it while out of body, during her NDE.

Skeptics cite the human factor as the reason to not validate the research, but they have a hard time explaining away the veridical evidence and how it's collected. Oftentimes collected in an ER, ICU, or operating theater environment, certain medical facts and baseline conditions can be proven. The fact that's perhaps hardest to grapple with is these lucid experiences of death have happened under conditions where science says they shouldn't and couldn't. A multi-year study published in 2023 in the journal *Resuscitation* ruled out the common arguments against NDEs as hallucinations, delusions, illusions, or dreams,[107] the most common arguments in favor of the hypothesis that NDEs are merely the last gasps of the dying brain, not due to the survival of consciousness after death. Forty percent of the more than five hundred patients tracked across twenty-five participating hospitals reported some degree of consciousness while being resuscitated. Their brains showed spikes of electrical activity and restarted normal activity up to an hour after clinical death. The patients described lucid death experiences that happened while they were unconscious, including awareness of themselves separate from their bodies, observing events without pain or distress, and a meaningful review of their life and relationships from a moral viewpoint. The study authors cite a long history of similar reports in the medical literature and speculate that the removal of the brain's natural inhibitory processes during the death process may open access to "new dimensions of reality."

It's an extraordinary admission, couched in language that avoids the usual

pitfalls of acknowledging that life after death is real.

A growing list of respected physicians have experienced an NDE and given extensive accounts, the most well-known being Harvard-trained neurosurgeon Eben Alexander. If anyone in science could tell us if NDEs are caused by brain processes, it would be the brain surgeon trained to know exactly how they work, especially while under life-threatening conditions. Try as he might, Eben, a staunch rationalist before his NDE, found nothing in the medical literature to explain how he had the most vivid experience of his life while comatose for a week with a brain infection. Other physicians reviewed his medical records and wondered how a brain under attack like that could produce any experience of consciousness.

Surgeon Mary Neal's NDE happened after she lost consciousness and died while trapped underwater for half an hour before rescuers pulled her from the water and began resuscitation, well beyond the seven-minute limit that the brain can go without the oxygen it needs to produce memorable conscious experience. During her NDE, she saw everything that happened at the scene of her resuscitation, and she returned to this life knowing that she would outlive her oldest son. He later died in an accident. Count her among the agnostics converted by their experience, as well as Dr. Anthony Cicoria, who died after being struck by lightning and returned to life with an unshakable desire to play classical piano. He is personally convinced of the afterlife's reality, and says it's indescribably spectacular.

Researchers point to these cases and their lasting transformative power as proof that the phenomenon is real. Greyson, the psychiatrist, says that hallucinatory experiences tend to fade quickly from memory, but NDE memories can be vividly recalled even decades later.

One approach that hasn't worked is an experiment that placed items out of sight above the area where patients would be worked on during resuscitation. Accurately naming the items would prove that a patient must have been out of body during their NDE, but the NDErs say they forget about other priorities the moment they leave their body. It's no surprise, then, that helping scientists with their research is not on the mind of a person coming to grips with the fact of their death and continued existence!

Miraculous healing associated with NDEs is another area of research that's given us evidence that science has difficulty with. Anita Moorjani died of cancer

after the disease metastasized throughout her body. Her organs shut down. She flatlined in the hospital and shouldn't have experienced anything, but instead her consciousness left her dead body and met up with discarnate spirits in an afterlife realm. They told her she was welcome to stay but had the option of returning to Earth and the cancer would be completely healed. The miracle would happen so she could tell others there really is life after death, but she must start living for herself and being her own person. Her tightly controlled life allowed no room for the true expression of who she was, and her disease was a manifestation of that fundamental unhappiness. She agreed, and her consciousness returned to the hospital room where she had died minutes earlier.

You can imagine the doctors' surprise!

You can also imagine their surprise when tests showed the cancer was gone, and Anita made a full recovery!

Eben's and Anita's cases are among the best documented. They wrote books and gave numerous interviews, and their medical records are irrefutable. NDE evidence used to be written off, but after fifty years of research, and support from prominent names in medicine, the consensus is shifting. Mainstream medicine acknowledges the phenomenon exists and none of the conventional explanations for it hold water. Medical science is far from agreeing that NDEs occur because consciousness survives death, but apparently it's willing to admit there may be other dimensions to reality.

It's amazing what a difference just a little change in wording can make. The study of NDEs may offer a way around the old objections to the research raised by those who would never allow the scientific establishment to support something as unprovable as the existence of God. At this point in the state of the science, what can be proven is that people past the point of death have experiences of consciousness under conditions when the brain couldn't be producing it. So, what's producing it? Because it's such an intriguing medical question we may just get an answer sooner rather than later.

EVP

Electronic Voice Phenomenon (EVP), also called Instrumental transcommunication (ITC), means speaking with the dead through technology, usually radios or

televisions, but a cottage industry has sprung up around the creation and sale of "spirit boxes," which are usually devices that scan various radio frequencies and piece together the signals. It sounds like something your crazy uncle does as a hobby, but some highly credible and technologically savvy people are involved in the research. Thomas Edison? Yeah, in 1920 he said he was working on a "spirit phone" to speak with people in the afterlife, though that invention never materialized. Then after the invention of the tape recorder, EVP experiments took off.

Save yourself the time and don't bother with the garbled recordings heard commonly on ghost hunter shows. The recordings of voices heard in white noise aren't reliable as solid evidence, either, though if you remember the movie *Poltergeist* you might think, "they're heeere." There are too many ways those recordings can be hoaxed and out-of-tune televisions and radios can pick up and blend transmissions. However, at times the voices seem to respond to questions asked by the experimenters. Some of the recordings are crystal clear, and the quality of the evidence seems to depend a lot on the psychic sensitivity of the experimenters.

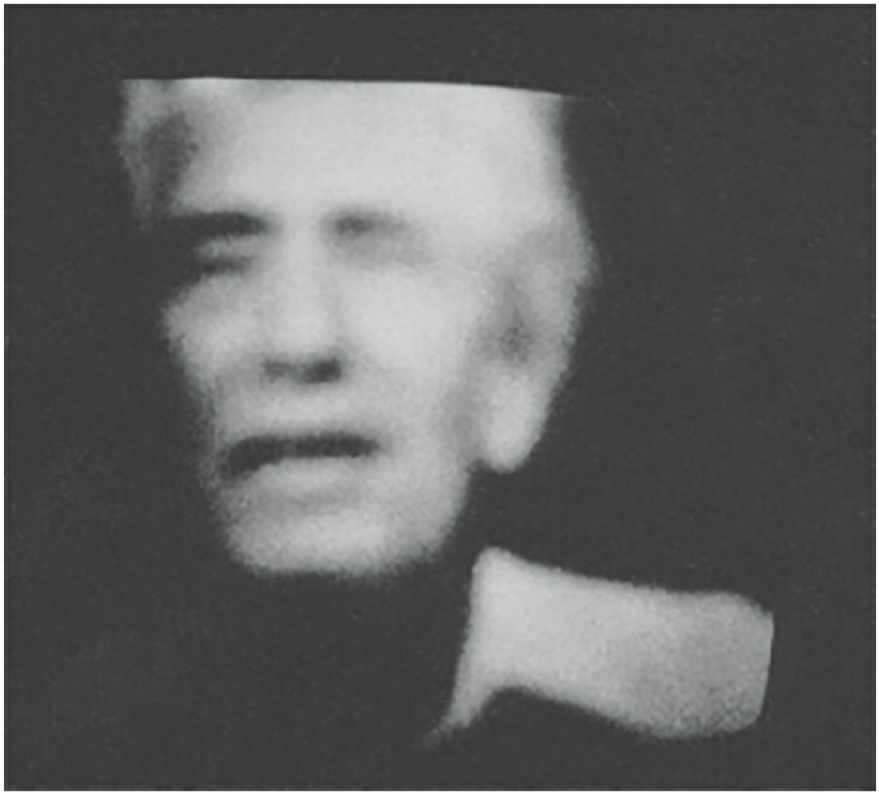
Marcello Bacci, for instance, was an Italian medium who ran ITC sessions for decades and invited scientists and researchers. Among them was Dr. David Fontana, a psychologist and former president of the Psychical Research Society, and Dr. Anabela Cardoso, a Portuguese diplomat and founder of the ITC Journal. Voices coming through Bacci's loudspeaker addressed them by name, speaking in the native languages of the people present, switching languages from person to person, and giving specific answers. During one particular experiment, a radio engineer removed all five tubes from the radio, but the communication continued. Bacci then unplugged the power completely and the voices continued.[108]

Radio experts inspected Bacci's equipment and found nothing to indicate a hoax. An attorney present for the demonstration ruled out the possibility of fraud or stray radio transmissions. No one could explain how the radio continued transmitting the voices despite the removal of all its tubes and disconnection from a power source, but we know what's up:

"They're heeere!"

Oddly, Bacci was the only one who could get the radio to receive the

communications, leading skeptics to say he hoaxed the demonstrations. But an alternative explanation is that the radio acted similarly to the mind of a trance medium when channeling the spirits of the deceased. Instead of borrowing the medium's vocal apparatus, in Bacci's case they borrowed the radio to transmit their voices. He had a special attunement with it similar to that demonstrated by PK experiments where people influence machines.



Claude Thorlin

Experimenters with extensive experience have also produced some of the best evidence from the other side. Friedrich Jürgenson pioneered ITC research starting in the mid-1900s. His interest focused more on television than radio, and as a parting gift, during his funeral, apparently he telepathically prompted a friend hundreds of miles away to turn on her television and tune to an empty channel. An image of him appeared in the blackness, and the friend took a Polaroid photo of it. The likeness is spot-on.

Another researcher, Konstantin Raudive, a professor and philosopher, recorded some one hundred thousand ITC audiotapes and involved more than four hundred

people in his research. After his death, he "made the rounds" and was heard and recorded by scores of people. In the documentary *Calling Earth*, a recording of him saying his name and the purpose for his communication comes through as clearly as if he were sitting next to you.

A hoax? It can't be ruled out in the absolute sense, but the credibility of the people involved makes it unlikely. Critics, on the other hand, blow a fuse when pointing out all the ways that electronics can produce artifacts and people can misinterpret what they hear. Dr. Diana Deutsch's research into "musical illusions" uncovered paradoxes in how the brain interprets what it hears, and it makes her cautious about interpreting sounds produced during ITC experiments. Indeed, what some people claim to hear as voices are heard by other people as noise, and there's no objective way of proving who is right or wrong.

If we take only the best evidence, the clearest voices heard and recorded under stringent conditions, we remove a lot of the ambiguity. Replication of the results will always be an issue—the people talking to us from the other side need to get their act together! Over and over, whether through loudspeakers or mediums, the same message comes through: the "living dead" are right here with us, but in another dimension. The multiverse theory of quantum physics also leaves room for the idea that slices of reality exist in parallel like a mass of bubbles separated by thin membranes, and tuning into those other realities only requires a small frequency shift, a notion popularized by director Christopher Nolan's *Interstellar*.

Cosmic, man. Now, pass the bong.

Noisy Ghosts

One source of supposed spirit manifestation Mishlove doesn't cite as evidence in his prize-winning essay is poltergeists, and for good reason: scores of well-documented cases traced the source back to psychic disturbances in the minds of people involved. It's not spirit phenomena, it's mental. More than five hundred case studies are in the files of the Society for Psychical Research, and quite a number were proven to be hoaxes. There's a long history of connection between poltergeist manifestations and mental disturbance.

Early on, researchers noticed that the loud rapping sounds, objects moving on their own, and other paranormal activities only happened when certain people were

at the location of the poltergeist phenomena. Those people, in many cases, were adolescent girls. Those girls, in many cases, lived in tough conditions of suppression and ostracism. Then they'd hit puberty and *whammo*! The shit hit the fan. In one famous case, multiple researchers were inside a home where poltergeist activity had been reported, and feces rained down on them from the ceiling—literally, a shit storm, one they speculated to be the physical expression of the mental turmoil of someone in the home. In other cases, rocks as large as melons "apported"—meaning appeared out of nowhere—into the room and fell to the floor. There are cases of injury caused by objects flying and fires starting.

It doesn't take a psychoanalyst to see these phenomena as meaningful expressions of someone's disturbed psychology, but what really boggles the mind is the fact that people are able to externalize it and produce phenomena in the physical world.

Researcher Loyd Auerbach witnessed firsthand a woman's throat depress as if strangled by invisible hands, and he interpreted it as an attempt to "shut herself up" after her work with a therapist had uncovered repressed memories of sexual molestation by her father. Other case studies uncovered instances of rape, abuse, and assault behind the mental disturbances that manifested as poltergeist phenomena. But far more often, especially in the early days, researchers said poltergeist cases boiled down to repressive pressure that releases "with a bang." Someone in the home lacks a healthy outlet for their thoughts and feelings, or some sort of sexual or psychic energy is bottled up and won't be contained any longer.

However, in some cases where scratches, bite marks, and burns appeared spontaneously on the body of the person at the center of poltergeist activity, doctors were able to reproduce it through hypnosis, strongly suggesting that some poltergeist activity is psychosomatic. Alien abduction cases may include similar physical evidence and happen when asleep, and disclosures of what was once top-secret information suggest that the phenomenon is common among military personnel and researchers who get too close to what the authorities are calling "non-human intelligence." Though it must be pointed out that there's absolutely no evidence proving the source of the phenomenon isn't ultimately human.

Carl Jung argues in his book *UFOs: a Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Sky* that modern humans are manifesting UFOs and encounters with cosmic entities

because they are cut off from authentic religious experience and don't live lives of meaning. And the kicker is, something that moves so strongly in the human psyche can manifest the phenomena, from lights in the sky to a personal visit from a star brother or sister, taking the form that the experiencer identifies with. It's much like a dream that way, a responsive, virtual environment to encounter the contents of one's own mind. And because dreams register on the nervous system as real experiences, and the dreaming function of the mind can activate spontaneously while asleep or awake, it's plausible that poltergeist and alien encounters can include physical proof such as marks on the body and still be self-generated experiences.

Pioneering psychoanalyst Nandor Fodor devised therapeutic treatment aimed at helping patients experiencing poltergeist activity to recognize it as manifestation of their unconscious mind. By making the experiencer also an experimenter, not only did it solve the underlying psychological issues, but it also provided scientists with great data and insight. It's an approach we should be duplicating in the study of all psychic functioning because it produces stellar results.

The cases that get a lot of publicity, like the Enfield Haunting that became the basis of the movie *The Conjuring 2*, raise suspicion and teach us more about how not to do things. *The Amityville, Horror* is another movie with a checkered history. The former leaves much room for doubt about the alleged poltergeist activity because of two reportedly mischievous adolescent girls who lived in the haunted home and the sensational press coverage that made the case famous. The Amityville case is almost certainly pure fraud perpetrated to sell the movie rights.

However, as unbelievable as it may sound, *The Exorcist* is based on a 1949 case that was all too real for the people involved. And the granddaddy of them all, *Poltergeist*, is loosely based on a case where a family experienced paranormal activity in their home, such as objects moving on their own and bottles of liquid popping open and spilling. Reportedly, some of the activity was witnessed by police officers and a priest. J. B. Rhine got involved in investigating the case and pointed to the usual suspect: an adolescent girl living in the home. Decades later, that girl, Lucille Herrmann, spoke with the makers of the docuseries *Real Fear: The Truth Behind the Movies* and affirmed some of the details. However, the movie is all Hollywood.

Interestingly, she said the bottles that popped open on their own, thought to be

the work of a poltergeist, were hot to the touch right after it happened. Too bad no one asked her if she could recall feeling "hot" emotionally at the time. The externalization of powerful emotions is the one explanation for poltergeist-related phenomena that really makes sense if you rule out "noisy ghosts," the definition of the word *poltergeist*, as the true cause.

Which leaves us to explain how emotions cause paranormal activities, and to answer other questions that pop up in cases involving alleged spirit phenomena. We have reincarnation cases where sudden and sometimes violent death appears to be a driving force behind why people return to life to tidy up unfinished business. We have cases where the powerful emotions related to death cause apparitions to appear to the living. We have spirit mediums who speak about things they shouldn't know and cause objects to materialize, in some cases because they are apparently externalizing something related to their internal experience. And most interestingly, many of the phenomena related to spirits and the afterlife are also noted in cases of ostensible psychic functioning: clairvoyance, telepathy, PK, apports.

Are supposed spirit phenomena actually generated by the people who witness them? That's the biggest question. We're not talking about frauds or hoaxes; we're talking about phenomena generated by the mind and its interaction with the physical environment. If it's really true, then there's a new world opening for scientific research because while proving spirits or life after death is a long way off, there are other avenues and corners of the universe to explore. Finding scientific answers could lead us to a new understanding of consciousness, perhaps one based in the quantum. A theory put forward by Nobel laureate Roger Penrose, known as orchestrated objective reduction, has withstood thirty years of scrutiny and continues to rack up supporting evidence that consciousness arises from quantum computational processes inside brain neurons. From there it's not a big leap to see the connections between the paranormal and quantum nonlocality and entanglement, properties of quantum physics that are strong candidates for explaining some of the mechanisms behind the paranormal. It could even answer our biggest questions about whether life is eternal and human beings have souls.

Doesn't it boggle the mind that the majority of the scientific community expresses little interest, despite the outstanding evidence and the hints of hidden aspects of the mind and untapped human potential? For all the talk of being rational

and scientific, it's actually irrational and unscientific to ignore this frontier. The heavy lifting is already done. We just need to connect the dots and find what's causing these effects. And if it turns out there really is a God behind spirit phenomena, isn't that something every good scientist would want to know?

Imagine Captain Kirk gazing upon a new world to explore and saying, "Meh, I'll sit this one out." Hey, Science, you're missing out. Research is being produced under stringent controls and still the effects keep showing up in the data. From investigating cases of alleged reincarnation, to tracking patients who come back from the dead, to being there when the dead communicate through mediums and electronics, the science of the paranormal has done its job. We wouldn't know about any of this stuff if it weren't for the courageous souls who went before us. Now it's our turn. These may seem like strange new worlds to the scientific establishment, but they are already being boldly explored. Don't miss out on the fun.

Many of the phenomena we have talked about are uncommon for most folks, but ask and you'll find out that nearly everyone experiences dreams and premonitions about the future. That's our next subject of investigation.

CHAPTER 4

PRECOGNITION AND DREAMS

The old argument against predicting the future is that it doesn't exist yet, so it can't be foreseen. Doesn't matter if it's seen in a crystal ball or a dream, if the claim is the future can be known, science disagrees.

Now we're looking up at Mt. Everest and wondering how we're ever going to scale such a height. To prove precognition, we must first refute the claim that the future does not exist. No one can see the future; there's nothing to see. That's accepted science, and that's the mountain we must climb.

But when an event comes out of nowhere and there's evidence that the future was known in the past, it naturally leads to wondering about how it's possible. The attacks on September 11, 2001, for instance. Many people dreamed about them ahead of time, and some of those people shared their dreams publicly. On that day, the four hijacked flights weren't as full as usual, an argument made in favor of people sensing what was coming. But the most interesting data supporting the idea that the attacks were sensed ahead of time comes to us from an experiment, the Global Coherence Project (GCP). It was running that morning and seemingly registered the event ahead of time like the deep underground rumbles preceding an earthquake. The rumbles were in humanity's collective consciousness, according to the scientists behind the experiment. Here's what happened.

In 1997, the experiment began by hooking up REGs to internet-connected computers around the globe. Once per second, 24/7, the REGs produced the equivalent of 200 coin flips and reported the number of heads or tails to a computer server at Princeton University. The median number of heads is 100, but in practice the results range about 15 percent—between 85 and 115. Deviations are when things

get interesting, but especially when they are persistent.

The theory behind the experiment guessed that persistent deviations would occur during major world events by grabbing the attention and stirring the emotions of millions of people, causing the REG's random output to turn not so random and patterns to show up in the data. Kind of *Matrix*-like, don't you think? A glitch in the number matrix is a sign of something unusual brewing. It happened during the funeral of Princess Diana and the US embassy bombings of 1998, and on the morning of September 11, 2001, but with a twist. The REGs, which had been running continuously for years already, started deviating four hours *before* the first plane struck.[109]

The theory posits that a major event brings many minds into coherence, and the REGs reflect it by edging away from randomness and toward coherence. The effect has been shown to happen on a smaller scale during events such as mass meditations, music concerts, and New Year's Eve celebrations. When a large number of people focus their attention on one thing, the random becomes non-random. On September 11, 2001, a world-changing event focused our attention, and the "coin flips" started deviating noticeably.

An experimental psychologist involved in GCP, Roger Nelson, speculates that just like people can experience premonitions, so can a (theoretical) global consciousness called the Noosphere. Consciousness produces information, and that information combines globally to form an information field, the Noosphere. Information is the foundation of physical reality at the quantum level, and the REGs use quantum events to generate their numbers. Coherence among many conscious beings changes the usual input of information to the information field, and subsequently the output changes, and Nelson says the GCP measures it.

It's a fascinating idea, but one that's hard to confirm. While some researchers independently validated the statistical analysis showing a non-random effect on the morning of September 11, other researchers made the effect disappear by tweaking the analysis. We are going to need stronger evidence to make a convincing argument in favor of precognition. Did one of the biggest names in sociology already give it to us?

Feeling the Future

The experiment itself was simple, but oh, the controversy it ignited, and not because it involved erotic imagery and college students. It was simple because the students at Cornell University were asked to guess which one of two curtains on a video display would open and reveal an image. Even odds—fifty-fifty chance—and as expected, the students guessed correctly 49.8 percent of the time. But those images were vanilla. Toss spicy images into the mix and the hit rate rose to 53.1 percent. And now the controversy begins, because the scientist conducting the experiment, social psychologist Daryl Bem, interpreted the results as showing that the students guessed better because somehow they sensed when the arousing images were incoming, a demonstration of precognition conducted in a prestigious laboratory by a prestigious professor.

A 3 percent difference may not seem like a big deal, but as far as science is concerned it's HUGE. Maybe not earth-shaking, but it is *statistically significant*, and significance is the hurdle to leap for scientific acceptance. It's the sort of rumble that wakes up the world of academia and gets the attention of its gatekeepers, the journal editors who choose which research gets published. Bem's credentials are also huge—he was one of the biggest names in social psychology before retiring, with a fifty-year track record of publication, and the editors at the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* deemed his research to be solid, so they published it, bringing it to the attention of the wider world.[110]

It doesn't take a fortune teller to predict what happened next.

The editors included a note acknowledging the controversy the "Bem study" was bound to stir up. Anything that smacks of psi in academia is asking for trouble from a small group of militant skeptics who think it's their duty to raise hell, and the brimstone started raining down even before the study appeared in print, reaching hurricane force during the following months. They couldn't fault Bem's mainstream methodology. The statistics held up under scrutiny. But they had all the ammunition they needed when the first batch of follow-up studies failed to reproduce Bem's results.

Never mind that initial failure at replication does not mean instant death for research. More batches of studies are needed before giving a thumbs up or down. Before that could happen, though, not only did the most vocal critics discredit the study, they questioned whether science itself was broken—how could it stoop to

such a low by accepting research that so obviously must be bunk because it appeared to prove something (precognition) that couldn't possibly be real? Accordingly, the research must be flawed, to put it mildly. "A huge crock of shit" is closer to capturing the tone of the most explosive critics.

When all was said and done, eighteen out of ninety replication studies produced significant results, and that 20 percent success rate is far above the 5 percent benchmark needed to claim that Bem's results were not a fluke. As far as science is concerned, he proved the existence of an effect produced by what appeared to be precognition.

His study didn't just produce statistics, though. It measured the physiological responses of the test subjects as they viewed the images, and yeah, they were aroused all right. Not when shown vanilla images—only by the erotic and other kinds of provocative ones, like crime scene photos. A polygraph does not lie; it measures unconscious bodily responses such as skin conductivity and heart rate, and time after time, the polygraph needles jumped *before* the computer had even chosen an arousing image to show. Vanilla images, on the other hand, were not sensed ahead of time.

One of Bem's other experiments tested participants on how well they remembered a list of words. Participants studied the words on the list they were tested on earlier, while others didn't study. Guess who scored better? Participants performed better on remembering lists of words they memorized *after the fact.* A mental effect that moves backward in time is called *retrocognition*.

Bem designed nine experiments for his eight-year study. All but one produced affirmative results, and all told, the odds of them being a fluke are 74 billion to 1. By comparison, odds of winning Powerball's big jackpot are 300 million to 1. He hit the jackpot, academically speaking.

All in all, Dr. Bem set up a solid study and used multiple experiments to come up with evidence for anomalous influences on cognition and affect, making it safe to say he proved that the future really does influence the past, and theoretically the world would never be the same. "Theoretically" being the key word, because once again science has given us evidence that could and should change how we understand the world, but after a bit of controversy the establishment just moved on and acted like nothing happened. The issue boils down to explaining how

information flows from the future to the present. Physics offers the transactional interpretation of quantum mechanics as one way that time can be understood as operating in two directions, forward and backward, but it only explains how things work at tiny scales. At large scales, time only flows in one direction, according to prevailing theory, and until someone explains why that's not true, orthodoxy wins the day.

Imagine the advantages of knowing the future through precognition. If a person can sense danger before it materializes, their odds of survival improve, and the theory of evolution approves. A trait that improves fitness in the evolutionary sense is passed on to descendants, and over time the organisms that lack the trait go extinct. Morphic resonance theory approves, too, because it says that superior adaptations spread rapidly across an entire species, even to members that aren't in the same environment as the originators, known as Hundredth Monkey Effect. It happens in the span of one generation, suggesting that traditional means of genetic transmission are not the answer.

But precognition provides more advantages than just enhancing physical survival. Some people use a sixth sense for predicting financial market movements. In an experiment focused on forecasting changes in the silver futures market, physicist Russell Targ gave the precognitive information to an investor. Nine weeks in a row their forecast hit the mark, earning them a cool $100k in 1982 money.[111] Then they lost nine times in a row, which Targ blames on himself for allowing changes in the methodology. Similar experiments succeeded in predicting movements of the Dow Jones and outcomes of sporting events. Nothing in the research suggests a surefire way of making those bets, though—if it existed, people everywhere would be doing it by now.

There are, however, groups of remote viewers in Las Vegas who make predictions on sports games using a protocol known as ARV—Associative Remote Viewing. Remote viewing is the paranormal ability to perceive information about a distant place or event. Associative means the protocol uses a target to represent a movement in the market or an outcome of a game they want to predict by associating remote viewing results with potential outcomes. The viewer gives their impressions, images, and sensations, and a panel of judges decides if they correspond with the target which only they know. Published research shows both

big hits and misses in trials conducted by various groups. Skeptics argue that ARV is unreliable and, judging by the fact that people everywhere aren't doing it by now, maybe they're right.

But maybe it boils down to finding the right protocol and the right people. Some remote viewers we'll talk about in the next chapter are proven to demonstrate astounding psychic perceptions under controlled conditions, and like with any other skill, some people are better than others. In the course of a weekend, anyone can be trained these days in this once top-secret protocol developed for the CIA's psychic spying program. There are even training apps, enthusiast groups, and online tournaments. Though the really talented and reliable viewers are hard to come by, they are out there. Some of them work with financial firms and intelligence agencies, and probably not so much with the researchers trying to prove that remote viewing is real.

It's a good time to note that people everywhere, every day, are trying to make predictions on markets and sports and presumably they aren't tapping paranormal abilities, but researchers have asked if that's really true. Even though more of those ordinary predictions are wrong than right, a fact the brokers count on, many people report a hunch or special feeling associated with their correct "hits." This could be how psi operates in our ordinary lives and we just don't know it as anything more than hunch. If certain researchers are correct, psi operates in the background as part of our interaction with the environment, a normal part of perception that happens subconsciously. But how to perceive the information correctly before you plunk down your paycheck on the Ohio State game this weekend is the question, and this is where remote viewing's use of a protocol differentiates itself from what other people are doing every day when they make predictions.

Reversion to the mean is one argument against precognition. It's the popular explanation for why some of the research trials start with a bang and end with a whimper, like in Russell Targ's experiment. Skeptics argue that prediction is simply how the mind works and it's bound to be correct some of the time. But does the nature of time itself leave room for something other than dumb luck when it comes to predicting the future? Accepted theories of physics say the answer is no, but Targ, a former director of the CIA-funded remote viewing program, together with Dr. Elizabeth Rauscher, who worked at NASA and Lawrence Livermore National

Laboratory, proposed a geometrical model of space-time that allows for zero-distance connection points, building atop advanced mathematical equations from Newton, Maxwell, and Einstein.[112] Their theory for how precognition functions boils down to one word: *nonlocality*.

The universe is connected at all points in space and time, as proposed by David Bohm and supported by other great physicists like Erwin Schrödinger and Henry Stapp, allowing for nonlocal influences. Or just call it "oneness" if you want, and see the footnotes to check out their paper. It may very well be the most mathematically precise theory describing the mechanism for psi functioning.

Neuroscientist Julia Mossbridge, co-author of *The Precognition Code*, compares time to a river. The water flows and you ride along with it, and up ahead the river runs into a boulder, a big event coming up in your life, sending ripples backward. You sense the change in the current before the river of time reaches the boulder. Theoretically, the more sensitive you are to fluctuations in the flow of time, the more precognitive information you are able to receive.

Julia says that *presentiment* is one means of receiving the information. You feel it, same as the students in the Bem study felt the provocative images they were about to view. Her studies measured the effect occurring up to fifteen seconds before the stimulus,[113] but presentiment is known to give up to a few hours lead time. Many witnesses at the Las Vegas mass shooting in 2017 reported seeing a woman running around the festival saying they were all about to die—videos of her loudly giving her dire warning are, or were, online. Did she take some bad acid, or did she sense the tragedy about to unfold? Dozens of people sensed something ominous coming in the hours and days leading up to the Aberfan coal mining tragedy where 116 Welsh children drowned in an avalanche of black industrial sludge,[114] suggesting that humans really do possess the ability to sense the boulders up ahead in the river of time.

The second means of receptivity is *precognitive remote viewing*, where a person gets an impression of what's coming up in time. The data produced by decades of experiments conducted by premier scientific organizations show that the anomaly exists. The window for seeing ahead in time is theoretically infinite, though the further ahead you try to see the fuzzier the details, generally. But physical distance doesn't seem to matter; precognitive remote viewing enables people to view details

about places as far away as other planets.

But is it really precognition, or some other psi function like telepathy that enables a person to not only see other places and times, but also to sense them in other ways like hearing, called *clairaudience*, or just knowing, called *clairsentience*? Or is it just simple intuition? Science asks us to be precise about our terminology and how we define it, but many of the scientists steeped in the research say we may not be able to split those hairs because we're really talking about one phenomenon that manifests in various ways and is sensed by different means.

Dr. Mossbridge followed the trail blazed by J. W. Dunne by proposing the existence of a universal observer that knows everything. But just don't call it God—it arises from an interpretation of quantum mechanics known as retro-causality, where changes in the present affect the past, and the future affects the present. It's a core idea fictionalized in the movie *Cloud Atlas*, where the actions of people living on different timelines all coalesce, with far-reaching results.

The math works by theorizing the existence of two simultaneous points of view or perspectives, one from inside the "block of time" where past, present, and future are thought of as equally real (Einstein's model) and one from the universal or omniscient observer outside the block. It's an imagined perspective that allows for the future to be simultaneously predetermined and known to the universal observer and undetermined and unknown from the point of view "inside the box."

If we imagine an outside-the-box observer, it allows for cause and effect relationships to run forward and backward in time, and it means that students who do their spelling homework after the test may actually improve their scores, as Daryl Bem demonstrated through experiments with memorizing lists of words, opening us up to a new understanding of how time works and we as conscious beings interact with it. Playing with conceptions of time opens up possibilities for human beings to possess extraordinary faculties based in extra-dimensional physics, and for precognition to be a fact of life. Esteemed thinkers like Bohm and esoteric philosopher John Bennett toyed with these ideas and reached stunning conclusions. Bennett's journeys into the mysteries of life led him to conclude that human timelines parallel to an eternal timeline, and the currency of their transactions, their interplay, is found in one's attitudes, whether positive or negative, and stance toward the relationship between humanity and the natural world—whether we are

here to serve it, or make it serve us.

It may seem like a pointless thought experiment, but like the creation of the atomic bomb, getting to the bottom may determine our odds of survival on this planet. Right now, we are living with the results—you might say the consequences—of centuries of transactions that extract value from the natural world without giving it back. In that sense, we are deeply in debt.

Interestingly, we come full circle back to the study of precognition. Dr. Mossbridge is in good company when she says that a positive atmosphere and mindset make precognition and other psi phenomena more likely to show up in experimental and operational situations, and conversely, less likely to show up in conditions of negativity. But we're not talking about Pollyanna-type "don't worry be happy" thinking or an "I want to believe" mentality. The scientists tout an attitude of love and kindness based on their experiences of seeing it create reality in its image and crack open the mind to greater abilities.

The Beatles said all you need is love, and if scientists like Mossbridge and Bohm are correct, it's more than just a catchy lyric.

Daryl Bem thinks the answers to how we sense the future are found in quantum physics. Sound familiar? Many theories about psi functioning harken back to quantum physics, and it's interesting to note that many of the pioneers in the field, such as John Wheeler and Werner Heisenberg, were thoroughly convinced that the mind possesses properties that trump biology.[115] Bem, in fact, studied physics before becoming a psychologist. The phenomena his research targeted are well known in psychology, and by reversing the course of time from forward to back instead of back to forward, he exposed the elephant in the room. There's a long history of studies showing the existence of precognition, so why is it not commonly accepted?

Because it can't be explained mechanistically to everyone's liking.

But it does show up in a meta-analysis of fifty years' worth of study[116]—not in a big way, but more than three hundred experiments give us the raw numbers to say something weird is going on and we should find out what it really is. If it's not precognition, then what is it?

Robert Jahn's 1982 paper, published in a prestigious engineering journal, the *IEEE*, is arguably the big splash that should have changed scientific opinion. The

editors invited Princeton's Dean of Engineering to share his best judgment and evidence with the engineering world, and he suggested to them that yes, psychic phenomena are real and produced by interconnectivity of the mind with matter, and that their presence in the human species may be a harbinger of expanding human consciousness.[117] But claiming that heartfelt feeling is a bridge between mind and matter is a jagged pill for rationalists to swallow.

Dr. Ed May, a physicist who ran the research side of the government's top-secret psychic spying program for a decade, thinks the explanation for precognition will be found in the physical sciences. Fortune tellers be damned, this isn't necessarily a psychic phenomenon as we commonly understand it, it's a natural capability of the mind. If what these scientists say is true, precognition is happening all the time, and it's the most promising area of research for parapsychology to make a breakthrough to mainstream acceptance. In fact, we could fill an auditorium with all the scientists who already accept it as real. Many of them also study dreams.

Dreaming the Future

On the tenth morning in a row that David Booth woke up after experiencing the same nightmare, he knew deep in his bones it would be the last time. On that day, May 25, 1979, his nightmare about an American Airlines passenger jet banking sharply to the left and crashing soon after takeoff would come true. He knew it. And later that day, all 271 people aboard American Airlines Flight 191 and two on the ground died in the worst aviation disaster in American history.

David tried to warn about the coming disaster. After the nightmare repeated for the seventh night in a row, he called the local FAA office and spoke with facilities manager Paul Williams. But the dream didn't give David enough information to identify which flight was in danger. Other than the airline, he could only recall that the jet's engines were mounted on its tail. Paul said it must be a DC-10, a common passenger jet of the era, but there wasn't enough information to take action. And besides, who is going to ground thousands of flights because one man had a dream —or even ten nightmares in a row showing the same outcome? People dream all the time about plane crashes that don't come true.

But a more compelling question is how David Booth dreamed *ten times in a row* about the disaster before it happened. Mainstream science tells us it's impossible,

yet history is chock full of examples, such as Julius Caesar's wife Calpurnia dreaming about his death the night before he was assassinated, and welterweight boxing champion Sugar Ray Robinson dreaming that his opponent Jimmy Doyle would die in the ring during their upcoming bout. Both came to pass (Doyle died later that night in the hospital but never regained consciousness after Sugar Ray knocked him out). Mainstream science says they must be coincidences—sorry, but the alternative answer just isn't possible. Existing conditions make certain things likely to happen eventually, which is another argument against precognitive dreams. They're simply putting two plus two together in unique ways, an outgrowth of the dreaming mind's ability to freely cross-associate, says mainstream neuroscience. It was predictable, for example, that Jimmy would eventually get badly hurt in the ring. He'd taken too many hard shots to the head during his career as a boxer. Before his bout with Sugar Ray, people were saying he should retire from boxing, but nothing would stop him from earning the prize money to buy his mother a home. In that sense, Ray's dream about Jimmy's accidental death is neither a big surprise nor precognitive. It simply surfaced a fear brewing in the back of his mind.

Dreams that accurately predict a future event are said to be precognitive by oneironauts, the people who both study and explore dreams and dreaming. The science of precognitive dreams traces back to J. W. Dunne, an aeronautical engineer who played a large role in designing Great Britain's first aircraft. Over decades, he meticulously recorded his dreams and noticed many of them came true, blending memories of past and future in roughly equal proportions. He might dream about a school he attended years ago, for example, and meet a stranger there who would then appear later in his ordinary daily life, usually within a couple weeks. A skeptical argument can be made that he incorrectly interpreted the stranger in his dream as the person he met later, but let's set aside that argument and proceed forward to the theory he proposed for how his dreams showed him the future, set forth in his 1927 essay "An Experiment with Time."

First, Dunne doesn't argue that he saw the future event in a dream; it was the memory of the event flowing backward in time, an important distinction that may help explain why precognitive dreams tend to get the big picture right but may be off about some details. Memories are subjective. He also argues that precognition is a natural ability everyone possesses because of the nature of time set forth in his

theory, but humans are wired to interpret backwards in time and most of us don't remember our dreams well enough to notice the forward-looking details.

In a nutshell, his theory of serial time proposes that each person has a timeline, as we commonly understand it, in the four-dimensional model set forth by Einstein, which includes three dimensions of space and one of time. Dunne proposes a perpendicular fifth dimension that tracks the complete timeline, from birth to death. Hyperspace mathematics proposes the existence of dimensions paralleling our four-dimensional world, giving us theoretical ground to stand on, but Dunne theorizes a higher dimensional observer, a "higher self," in the fifth dimension that sees the complete timeline. It gives us an observer in the here and now, and one that sees beyond it. The stacking of observers continues up into higher dimensions (we say "higher" as a metaphor for its greater field of view), and at the top is one universal observer that sees all.

During the dream state, the focus of awareness may shift to the observers in higher dimensions that know the future. From that point of view, the "future" is the same as the present and the past. It is all "one," and that's what Einstein said, too, about the nature of time. The way we understand time as a linear progression is an illusion created by our limited point of view in this dimension.

It's an interesting theory, especially for the spiritually inclined. The existence of a higher self is a staple of certain spiritual systems.

Dunne says the future is somewhat malleable in that information about it can be acted upon in the present to change an outcome. Dream that tomorrow you will be in a car accident and you can decide to stay home instead of venturing out. In that sense, the future isn't absolutely determined.

Dream researcher Ian Wilson says he changed the future after a dream showed him driving in his car on a snowy road with his young daughter strapped into a car seat. As he approached an intersection, he drove over a patch of black ice hidden beneath fresh snowfall. The car slid into an intersection just as a speeding truck entered from his left. In a flash, he knew he wouldn't survive the impact but his daughter would, and she'd grow up without her father.

How would you respond if you had such a dream?

Ian felt its warning—the realism stood out from his ordinary dreams, prompting him to buy top-of-the-line snow tires, something he'd never done despite living in

Canada. A couple months later, while driving along the same road and in the same car, with his daughter strapped into her car seat, he approached the intersection where the crash took place in his dream. He drove over black ice hidden beneath fresh snowfall, pressed on the brakes and the car turned into a sled, but unlike his dream the studded tires gripped well enough to slow him down. The same truck sped into view from his left but plowed through the intersection before his car entered it.

Ian says he changed the outcome foreseen by his dream. What do you think?

To answer the question scientifically about whether it was a wild coincidence, we'll begin with the odds against chance. What are the odds that a dream may coincidentally show accurate details of a future event? Consider the frequency that people dream about out-of-control vehicles. Some lists of the most frequent dreams put it in the top ten. Dreams about driving in the snow are not uncommon, and neither are dreams that feature trucks. It's also not surprising that a protective father like Ian would dream about driving with his daughter in a scenario that puts them in danger. *Threat rehearsal* is mainstream theory that dreaming developed in humans to increase the odds of survival. What is surprising is how one dream combined all the details of a future event, all but the final outcome. But it's still not beyond chance.

But nothing is beyond chance, when it comes down to it. Somebody somewhere is going to dream about something that seemingly comes true. With billions of people having four to seven dreams nightly on average, those are the odds, and that's the end of the story as far as mainstream science is concerned.

The subjectivity of dreams is another sticking point. One person's prophetic dream is another person's jumble of random imagery onto which meaning is imposed. According to another leading theory, *activation-synthesis*, dreaming is nothing more than fragments of memory stirred up by activity of the brainstem, and because the mind is programmed to seek out patterns in its input, it tries to make sense of the jumble. It's like interpreting a Jackson Pollock painting. Some people see a work of art, other people see paint splashed on a canvas. The difference is the subjective point of view of the observer. Meaning is in the eye of the beholder. How do you test something that only occurs within the mind of the person who experiences it? Subjective experiences are the cornerstone of psychological science,

yet the professionals in that field are some of the most ardent critics of anything that smacks of psi.

Early in its existence as a scientific field of study, the psychological approach to dreams pioneered by psychoanalysis got blasted for creating theoretical edifices atop foundations of speculation. Lacking the sort of hard proof that "hard science" demands, and stinging from the criticism of their peers, mainstream psychologists shunned everything in their purview that didn't hold up. But little good it did—even mainstream scientific findings in psychology can be wrong half the time. Known as the replication crisis, it flamed up when only thirty-nine out of one hundred findings of high-level studies in psychology were replicated.[118] And out of twenty-eight classic and contemporary findings in psychology, only half passed the test the second time around. So, if the study of the subjective experience of dreaming doesn't qualify as a science, does anything about the field of psychology?

It's safe to say that dreaming isn't the easiest subject to study, but for the psychically inclined their dreams are often their first taste of the truly *weird*—a word from Old English originally defined as having the power to control fate or destiny. It evolved to mean something uncanny or supernatural, and precognition fits both definitions to a T.

Early experiments in precognitive dreaming produced promising results. Researchers at Maimonides Dream Lab grabbed the attention of the scientific community by producing eye-popping statistical numbers, but follow-up studies found them difficult to reproduce. Half a century later we're still trying, and by trying, we produce a body of evidence that adds up to a modest effect size overall but with extremely high probability that an anomaly really exists. It's worth investigation, which in science is a way of expressing support while hedging your bets. Exploration of new frontiers is supposed to be what scientists live for.

For those of us who don't nerd out over numbers, the real action is the individual reports of precognitive dreaming that make us say, "no way!" No way could it be a coincidence to dream so accurately about something coming up in time. Historical cases like the reports of Abraham Lincoln dreaming about his assassination are interesting, but scientifically speaking, they are anecdotes that can't be trusted enough to hang your hat on. For observations about precognitive dreaming to hold up to scrutiny they must be made under controlled conditions, and over the years the

precognitive dreaming contests conducted by the International Association for the Study of Dreams (IASD) did just that.

Participants in the contest are told that an image will be selected from a pool of possibilities, and they should intend to dream about it and submit their reports before the deadline. The following three examples show just how wildly accurate the dreams can be:

- In 2012, first prize went to the participant who reported a dream about a painting displayed at an exhibition, depicting a scene in a small nineteenth-century drawing room featuring a man in his thirties who attacks the dreamer with something that looks like a Swiss army knife, with a large blade and little scissors sticking out. In the target picture, Jan Vermeer's "The Geographer," a man in his thirties holds a compass that resembles scissors and is in a nineteenth-century drawing room, and even more remarkably, the name "Vermeer" popped into the participant's head during the dream. It's an exact hit.
- In 2013, first prize was awarded for the dream about going to a meeting of some kind, at a high, outdoor location that offered an almost panoramic view. The dreamer saw large, hewn standing stones and felt an air of mystery, and ended her report by saying she had the impression of being at Stonehenge. The target picture shows neo-druids performing a ceremony at Stonehenge. Exactly right.
- The winning dream from 2014 starts off with the dreamer riding bicycles with her father. He falls off and turns into a bay-colored horse with a glossy dark mane. The target picture shows a rodeo scene where a father-aged man rides a bucking, bay-colored horse with a glossy dark mane.

Those correct hits are among forty years' worth of fascinating entries to the precognitive dreaming contest, and they appear highly suggestive that precognitive dreaming is real. As a member of the IASD, this author can attest to the fact that most of its members are convinced by the evidence. Psychology in general vehemently disagrees, though, only proving that materialist theory lacks a framework for explaining precognition. The evidence is there.

But it will always be questioned. Until we can record dreams like television shows—which is being attempted technologically—the hard scientists will never

accept precognitive dreaming because it's too subjective. People can never be 100 percent relied on to accurately report their memories, making precognitive dreaming an outlier in science until the paradigm changes. That's happening.

For others, the evidence is abundantly present in the century-worth of experiments. The data have been run through every sort of statistical analysis and the effect shows up again and again, but some of the best evidence comes from dreams about actual crimes.

Vermeer

Guilty as Charged

In the futuristic sci-fi movie *Minority Report*, the police don't just investigate crimes, they prevent them based on visions of the future courtesy of specially-trained "Precogs." Murderers are arrested before the crime, and determinism trumps free will in the name of justice. The movie did more to bring precognition to public

attention than all the scientific studies combined, but Samuel Clemens put it right before our eyes long ago, when he talked about his dream that foresaw the death of his brother Henry. It came true in every detail: the metal coffin he dreamed about Henry lying in, the borrowed suit Henry was dressed in, and the bouquet of white roses with one red one in the middle laid on Henry's chest. The confluence of details between the dream and the event it foresaw haunted Sam for the rest of his life.

On the milder side, there's Darlene Randolph's published account in *FATE* magazine of a dream showing her the license plate number of the car that smashed into her husband's then sped away (in waking life). She woke up knowing it would lead her to the criminal. Her husband remembered two of the plate numbers from the night he was hit, and her dream came up with the other five. Her detective work led police to the hit-and-run driver. For the rest of her life she insisted that it all happened.

What are the odds of it being a wild fluke? Start with 1 in 100,000, the odds of correctly guessing five numbers in a row between zero and nine. Unless Darlene lied her ass off about the whole thing, we should be asking how in the world her mind pulled in the accurate information right when she needed it. Since the data show that need drives spontaneous psychic phenomena, we can theorize that her need to know who hit her husband made her psychic enough that night to help her dream accurately about a past event for which she hadn't been physically present.

The April 1960 issue of the same magazine recounts a historical case from the Canadian frontier that led to the conviction and execution of Charles King for the murder of Ed Hayward. On the night of Ed's murder, his brother, George, thousands of miles away in England, awoke from a nightmare where he saw Ed murdered by his business partner, who turned out to be Charles King. He wrote down everything he could remember: the forest scene, the Indian tepees nearby, and the big campfire where the killer tossed the corpse. In his nightmare, George Hayward saw the argument erupt, then saw Charlie shoot Ed and dispose of incriminating evidence in a nearby marsh, and an Indian woman watching from the shadows and running away just before the murder.

The case enjoys two big facts in its favor. For one, George's story was published in his local newspaper in England—word had gotten around after he told friends

about it. Two, George traveled to Canada and identified Charlie on sight as the murderer based on what he saw in his dream. By then, Canadian police had accumulated circumstantial evidence: they had interviewed the Indian woman who witnessed the argument and found some of Ed's personal belongings in the marsh. But George's story iced the cake.

"Guilty!"

Another case that led to a guilty verdict in more recent times gets even stranger. In February 1977, respiratory therapist Teresita Basa, a Filipina immigrant, was found dead in her apartment with a knife sticking out of her chest. Chicago police had few clues, but did find a note written by Teresita that said "get theater tickets for A.S." With the case growing cold, a remarkable turn of events happened when a Filipino immigrant contacted the lead detective. Dr. Jose Chua, who worked with Teresita at Edgewater Hospital, told the detective that one night while his wife, who knew the deceased, was taking a nap, she spoke in the voice of Teresita. She identified herself to the doctor and said that her killer was still at large. She named Allan Showery, initials A.S., who worked with them at the hospital. Mrs. Chua had invited the spirit of Teresita to come to her dreams and reveal the murderer, and apparently it happened!

When Dr. Chua did not act on the information spoken through the mouth of his sleeping wife, the voice returned, admonishing him and giving more details. Showery had stolen some of Teresita's jewelry and given it to his girlfriend. The otherworldly voice even provided the name and phone number of a relative who could identify the jewelry. Dr. Chua passed on the information to the detective, who then questioned Showery. He denied involvement but admitted he'd been at Teresita's apartment the night before she was found dead, then later confessed after Teresita's jewelry was found in the possession of his girlfriend, just like the voice predicted.

"Guilty!"

Accounts of that case usually end with "we'll never know for sure how Mrs. Chua channeled the information that led to Teresita's killer," and it's the same with others that are well-documented and unexplainable by materialist science. The Red Barn Murder and the murder of Hong Kong celebrity Cai Tianfeng are bookends around a case history spanning centuries. Together with the data, the scientific case

is made that the mind can transcend the usual boundaries of space and time.

But it can also be said that these phenomena are products of the natural world. First Sight theory views them as prehensive and preconscious interactions between mind and matter. Carl Jung viewed them in terms of events that synchronize with the mind in a dynamic interplay beyond normal cause and effect. They are not produced; they happen of their own volition.

And they have a life of their own. Like the unconscious mind itself, they operate under their own irrational sort of logic and defy attempts at explanation on empirical grounds, where we want to define them. Instead, they invite us to step out of our mechanistic conception of the world and learn to know reality as it really is. As they say, mystery is not the absence of meaning, but the presence of more meaning than we can understand.[119]

We're at the point where we can say that either the world works differently than how mainstream science has modeled it, or the science of the paranormal is terribly flawed. Or perhaps it's both. Most people sit on the sidelines as these debates unfold because they don't know enough to pick one side or the other, but what do you think after seeing what our investigation of the science of the paranormal has uncovered so far? Is there even one study or case where you'd say something paranormal must be at work? And if so, is it truly paranormal, or just something we don't understand well enough to explain other ways?

These questions don't have much bearing on ordinary life for most people, but times are changing. Disclosures about top-secret military and intelligence programs and testimony before Congress from whistleblowers suggest it's a subject taken very seriously in those circles. The reason being that certain "human assets," known as psionics, are believed to be in telepathic communication with the phenomenon in the skies known as UFOs and UAPs. A former special forces operative named Jake Barber claims that the assets are recruited into Special Access Programs to communicate with the craft and the entities operating them, and that the craft and entities aren't coming from other solar systems; they originate from the place we call the afterlife. The claims can't be dismissed out of hand; numerous former military personnel have come forward to vouch for Barber and his claims. They say they have been on hand as the craft was "summoned," or perhaps a better word is "invited," to make an appearance, and personally had close encounters. And it

happened in some cases in front of large numbers of people at places like Esalen Institute in California. As yet, no “smoking gun” evidence is known publicly, but if what Barber and others say is accurate, it’s only a matter of time.

This is no longer a subject debated mostly among a small group of scientists. Conversations are happening in the highest circles of the US government, and also other governments, that not long ago would have been impossible. Speculation is that the gatekeepers realize they can no longer keep a lid on these secrets so they are gradually disclosing the truth. And the stakes couldn’t be higher, not only for national security and the promise of developing fantastic technology, but also for world order. See, one of the things researchers and operatives have learned the hard way is that the more the phenomenon is engaged with, the more it engages with us. If this information suddenly bursts onto the scene in a big way and people everywhere start running their own experiments, our skies might fill with these craft in such a way that causes a huge sensation, with people on the ground communicating with them. On the one hand, it sounds like great end run around the scientific establishment for the science of the paranormal. On the other hand, the consequences are potentially catastrophic.

Perhaps it’s true that some secrets are better left untold. And it’s definitely true that the time has come as a people to have our own conversations about these subjects.

CHAPTER 5

ESP, CLAIRVOYANCE, AND REMOTE VIEWING

Professor of psychology Elizabeth Mayer had no other options left when she consulted a dowser to try to find the one-of-a-kind harp stolen from her daughter at a recital in Oakland, California. Every other lead she'd pursued came up empty. Dowsing is the practice of using a forked stick or thin pieces of metal to locate water, like Russell Crowe's character does in *The Water Diviner*, but for ages it's also come in handy for finding lost and buried objects. With nothing left to lose, Elizabeth took a friend's suggestion to get in touch with Harold McCoy, the president of the American Society of Dowsers at the time. What happened next changed her life.

On the phone from Fayetteville, Arkansas, Harold told her that the harp was still in Oakland. Send him a map and he'd pinpoint the location. Elizabeth overnighted it.

Two days later, he called back and told her where to find the harp. She drove to that spot on the map, got the street address, and phoned the police saying she'd been tipped off that her daughter's prize harp was in that house. *Sorry, not enough to get a search warrant*, they said. So, she posted flyers in the immediate vicinity asking anyone who'd seen the harp to please call her. Three days later, her phone rang. A man said he'd seen it in the possession of a neighbor and could help return it.

Two weeks later, Elizabeth drove to an all-night grocery store and met a teenager in the parking lot. The exchange was made and she returned home with the harp in the back of her station wagon and a conundrum as a scientist like nothing else. *This changes everything*, she thought as she pulled into her driveway.

The respected psychologist butted up against proof of ESP, changing everything

she thought she knew about how the mind works. It's one thing to sit on the sidelines critiquing beliefs about psychic functioning, and quite another for a man two thousand miles away to solve her mystery of the missing harp. Unless Harold McCoy solved the case himself and pretended to do it through dowsing, the only other explanation that fits the evidence is that he employed a form of ESP known as clairvoyance. He saw in his mind where the harp was in Oakland, and only needed the map to pinpoint and confirm what came to him as a vision, a feeling, or just a spontaneous knowing.

That explanation didn't sit well with Mayer. An associate professor at UC Berkeley and instructor at UC Medical Center in San Francisco, this clinical psychologist drank the Kool-Aid offered by materialist science's claim that psychic functioning not only isn't real, but *can't* be real. Instead of shying away from the evidence that punched her in the nose, though, she punched back by investigating the parapsychological literature, finding it to be full of solid science and irrefutable findings, despite what she expected.

She punched back by speaking privately with colleagues and listening to their accounts of ESP and other strangeness, and by publishing her findings and offering theories grounded in accepted science for how it works.[120]

By actually speaking in-depth with gifted clairvoyants and the scientists who study them, coupled with her psychoanalytic training to understand what other people experience, she knocked out the main arguments against ESP and exposed the scientific establishment as an emperor that has no clothes. Strip away its pretense of knowing better and what's left is a community afraid to confront reality as it is, a reality that includes anomalous forms of perception and cognition, Mayer is convinced. There's no other plausible explanation for how a dowser helped her find her daughter's harp. How did he really find her harp? No one really knows except Harold, and he's no longer with us to ask. Nor is Elizabeth. He didn't do it for the money; he helped Elizabeth free of charge. To find out what's up, let's start by investigating what clairvoyance is all about.

Breaking Boundaries

Clairvoyance means "clear vision," and it's the ability to mentally see distant events, people, places, and objects using faculties of perception beyond the ordinary. For

Elizabeth Mayer, it boils down to seeing reality as it is rather than colored by what we want or believe it to be. We want reality to be orderly and predictable. We believe it to be knowable entirely through physical processes. But then ESP throws a haymaker. Reality is more—*much more.*

Reality is a perception which we shape to maximize survivability, not to see it as it is, and it's safer to just pretend otherwise when it's not to our liking, according to theorist Dr. Donald Hoffman. That's what many scientists do with the evidence for ESP, even after it smacks them upside the head. Elizabeth cites numerous cases of her colleagues and patients experiencing ESP and the ordeal scaring them half out of their minds. In private, they shared their stories with her: the colleague who knew the moment a patient walked in for their appointment that the patient's mother had recently died; the colleague who was suddenly struck by a strong feeling that his partner's son was in trouble and it turned out he'd just been in a bad car accident; the student who instantly guessed to four decimal places the strength of a chemical solution that should have taken hours to work out. She heard from a patient who dreamed that Elizabeth was going to take a trip to Arizona, and indeed she had a trip planned for that week but had never mentioned it. She calls these instances of "extraordinary knowing," and that door blew wide open once she accepted it as a real phenomenon. But unlike most of the people Elizabeth knew in the scientific community, instead of stepping back and closing it again, she charged right through. The psychologist in her had to know the reasons why people were capable of such extraordinary mental feats.

Elizabeth discovered that survival is the reason in many cases. ESP develops in some people as a radar for trouble coming. She cites the case of a successful professional woman who consulted her about the flashes of knowing she'd experienced all her life. Rationally, she couldn't explain how they happened, but through her psychoanalysis she discovered why. As a child growing up in a home with a wildly unpredictable alcoholic parent, she developed an internal radar for knowing when he'd come home drunk and violent. Around fifteen minutes before the bomb dropped, she'd get a feeling it was time to hide her sister and herself in the back of the closet with their blankets and teddy bears. Clairvoyance helped her survive, but later in life it caused trouble in relationships because she knew things to be true but couldn't explain how. It carried a psychological charge of fear that hit

her out of nowhere—fear associated with her father's abusive behavior.

Variations of her story are told by clairvoyants and others who say they regularly experience ESP. It's a mental functioning rooted in their psychology and shaped by their environment, but admitting to it can earn a person a trip to the mental hospital—or send a mainstream scientist to the unemployment line. Gestalt psychology teaches us that we can shift back and forth between points of view but not see both at the same time, and it forces us to choose rationality even if it means denying the nonrational reality, because that's how we survive in this world.

Shifting between regular perception and extrasensory perception is like looking at a world map and seeing either the continents or the oceans, Elizabeth says. Focus on the land masses and the oceans recede from view. Focus on the oceans and the land recedes. Clairvoyants are able to switch their focus back and forth. They describe it as letting down their boundaries, which enables them to perceive the nonrational information that's always in the background of the mind, and of reality.

ESP breaks down boundaries of space, time, and identity, but those boundaries are fundamental to rationality. Boundaries are how we carve out space to operate in this reality. Threats to boundaries are threats to oneself. It makes ESP a psychological threat, but psychologists like Elizabeth see it as an extension of normal perception, as "extrasensory." The scientist in her wanted to know why her colleagues in science refused to accept what the evidence clearly shows, and her conclusion is that "Science has stopped acting like science. Instead it's acting more like a religion—or politics."[121]

Recorded accounts of ESP date back to ancient Egypt and China, but the term has only been around since J. B. Rhine coined it in the 1930s. When he and Louisa Rhine entered the scene, materialist science with its emphasis on stats and facts was taking hold in the West. Through millions of trials under controlled conditions, the Rhines led the science of the paranormal into the new era, and their data still stand as a cornerstone for the contention that ESP exists. Then and now, it shows up in the numbers. A meta-analysis of thirty-six studies conducted up through 2022 produced a strong effect size and the numbers are too big to write off as a fluke.[122] Considering the long history of ESP reports, the trail of hard data reaching back almost a century, and the consistency of the effect showing up under controlled conditions, the case is made. It's not the spectacular "UFO lands on the White

House lawn" proof that the public is waiting for, but the science is clear. We also have a good grasp of the psychology involved, thanks to Dr. Mayer and others. But raw data and millions of trials, as we've seen, are not enough to make the case. Proponents of ESP will have to find another way.

One Touch Says it All

Of all the ESP experiments conducted since research began nearly two centuries ago, psychometry, the gaining of impressions about an object by touching it, offers science some of the clearest evidence of clairvoyance obtainable under controlled conditions. Psychometry is the most plausible answer to explain what reputed clairvoyant Stefan Ossowiecki demonstrated in a test where French scientists handed him a sealed box with a meteorite inside. He described seeing in his mind a huge planet rushing through space and colliding with another huge object, a catastrophic cosmic event. Pieces fell to earth as meteorites. He then guessed the object in the box to be a meteorite, and described the physical appearance, background, and personal interests of the man who donated it. Stefan knew it had been stored in a cabinet for many years on the premises where the experiment took place, and that the donor was deceased.[123] He knew it all by simply touching the box.

But like a child on Christmas morning, did Stefan guess by hearing the meteorite roll around inside the box, or maybe he caught a whiff of charred carbon, or got the information from an insider? Even the slightest possibility for sensory leakage or fraud can make all the work of conducting an experiment amount to nothing. Allowing Stefan to handle the box opens the possibility for him to gain information about its content through his haptic senses, the perception of objects by touch. At odds greater than chance, people were able to guess the number of objects inside a box simply by handling it briefly,[124] but what are the odds of guessing that a meteorite is inside if fraud and leakage are ruled out? Astronomical (pun intended).

In other tests, Stefan reproduced a drawing concealed inside a sealed envelope, and knew the contents of a letter word for word. Like a psychic bloodhound, he tracked down criminals and located missing people by handling objects they'd touched. He found a lost brooch by handling the coat it had been pinned to. By touching a safe that share certificates had been stolen from, he helped a bank

identify an employee as the thief. There's no plausible explanation other than ESP if we rule out the possibility that it was just a cover for his traditional detective skills, like in the show *Psych.*

Hand Ludwig Kahn a folded piece of paper with writing on it and he could quickly recite the contents word for word. After being accused of trickery, he rose to the challenge by having the paper burned to ashes and still knowing what had been written on it.[125] Nobel laureate physiologist Charles Richet tested him, as did other prominent researchers who came away convinced by his feats. Scientists aren't foolproof, but to argue it's trickery would mean Ludwig fooled some of the best minds in science—repeatedly, under controlled conditions. But it's possible. The abundance of caution is necessary in light of known cases where people demonstrated extraordinary but explainable perceptual abilities. Professional gambler Phil Ivey lost nearly $20 million in gambling winnings after courts ruled that he gained an unfair advantage by "edge sorting," an ability to spot tiny imperfections less than 1/64th of an inch in playing cards. Some people really are that good, and if they participate in an ESP experiment that doesn't control for their "very particular set of skills," to quote Liam Neeson in *Taken,* they are the apple that spoils the batch.

Jeanne Morel and Sean Harribance demonstrated psychometry under controlled conditions. By handling a picture sealed inside an envelope, they were able to describe specific and peculiar details about the people and places depicted in it. Psychic Ingo Swann was known to dispense with the drama and simply tell you what was inside the envelope without handling it. This sort of testing has its flaws because of the possibility of sensory leakage, though the extraordinary controls put into place for many of the experiments rule it out, especially the more recent studies that incorporated feedback from peers and critics. We have people like James Randi to thank for showing us how to make the experiments airtight. With controls in place, the feats of ESP were repeated. They were replicated. And if the positive results aren't due to fraud or cold-reading, then what?

Critics have one answer left: it's nothing. Now it's their turn to make the case against ESP and not just criticize the research of others.

Disproving ESP

Scientists have tried to disprove ESP by affirming the null hypothesis that it does not exist. Harvard psychologist Stephen Kosslyn failed to find ESP functioning in the brain,[126] presumably making a strong case against its existence. His paper in a top neuroscience journal enjoyed a lot of attention, but oddly, the experiment's design presumed the existence of ESP. Kosslyn used an fMRI to test for differences in brain response between ESP and non-ESP stimuli. Really, *ESP* stimuli? Let's see what he means.

To test for telepathy, the experiment followed the classic approach of using a "sender" to look at and transmit pictures shown to them on a video screen, to the mind of the receiver, but added a modern twist: the brains of the receivers were scanned while performing the task. The pairings of sender and receiver were people in close relationship with each other, and some trials even tested how well identical twins performed the ESP tasks. Good move, Dr. Kosslyn. The history of psi research shows time and again that close couplings create higher success rates. Researchers also mixed in arousing images with neutral ones, encouraged a playful atmosphere, and tried to keep the experiments interesting for the participants, more good moves.

But waiting until afterward to give feedback to the participants was a bad move. Immediate feedback is crucial for ESP functioning in the lab. The experiments also excluded left-handed participants, another oversight. Left-handedness correlates with right-brain hemisphere dominance, and in other studies of brain response, ESP-related activity showed up in the right hemisphere.

To test for clairvoyance, researchers displayed the pictures out of sight from the participants, and to test for precognition, they showed participants the pictures again in the future, an ode to Bem's experiments with list memorization. These ESP stimuli follow the classic approach, and so too does Kosslyn's assumption that ESP occurs in the brain. To better their odds of detecting something interesting, the researchers could have preselected participants who showed aptitude for ESP tests, or recruited people like Gerard Senehi and Wagner Alegretti, whose brains showed strong activity during ESP trials.[127][128] If we think of ESP as something that everyone is capable of but relatively few people develop to the point of demonstrating consistently, it makes sense to pre-select based on aptitude. Instead, Kosslyn and his team took the traditional route of selecting from the general

university population. It's a puzzling choice considering all the other good decisions they made when designing their study.

Kosslyn claimed to all but confirm the null hypothesis by not finding the expected differences in brain response to ESP vs. non-ESP stimuli. He seems to be comfortable asserting that his findings add to the scientific consensus against the existence of ESP despite widespread public belief to the contrary. But the fact that ESP has not been disproven says a lot, too. Many have tried, and many have come up short.

On top of what we've covered in *The Science of the Paranormal*, there are studies showing that dogs respond to psychic commands, that plants respond to emotions, that people sense when they're being stared at, that colors, words, and images can be seen with the hands, that people can see without using their eyes, that in vitro pregnancy success rates double when the mothers are prayed for, that Qigong masters can make cancer cells disappear, that objects can appear out of thin air, and that music can play without an apparent source. Read the research, like Dr. Mayer and many other once-skeptical scientists have, and it makes you wonder if the consensus against ESP is dead wrong.

When something cannot exist according to beliefs, no amount of evidence to the contrary is convincing enough. All it takes is one excuse to tag a study with scientific pejoratives like "controversial" or "suspect" and scare away the curious. But there is a type of ESP that passes all the tests, with the highest success rates out of all the types of ESP tested, and Dr. Mayer and many other scientists cite it as the best evidence. We saved the best for last.

Remote Viewing

Okay, science lovers, you want hard data and studies done under controlled conditions by scientists with pedigrees. You want replication. You want science! And on top of all that, it would help to have the CIA's seal of approval, because if anyone has to deal with reality it's them, and they are not going to say that something is real unless it's so. (Unless of course they have a hidden agenda, which wouldn't be surprising. It is a spy agency, after all. More on that later.)

Here it is, a paranormal ability of the mind that's been utilized under controlled conditions since the early 1970s and proven to enable specially trained "psychic

spies" to see into top secret vaults and facilities and locate missing people. Intelligence agencies, military services, and numerous private organizations use it or have used it, giving us a decades-long track record that includes spectacular successes. Some people call it clairvoyance or ESP, but the name of the protocol developed at Stanford Research Institute (SRI) and duplicated by various secret military and intelligence programs, now declassified, is *remote viewing* (RV).

RV is a protocol for gaining information remotely using only the mind. The information could be about a person, place, object, or event. The two researchers who pioneered the protocol at the behest of the CIA, physicists Hal Puthoff and Russell Targ, initially called it anomalous cognition. These days, the popular term is *psychic spying*, and it's the real deal. Early experiments proved so successful, they were published in top journals like *Nature*[129] and *IEEE*.[130] The design of the early batch of experiments involved a target person sent to a location while the viewer remained at the lab at SRI, described their impressions, and made drawings. The PEAR lab also ran similar experiments using Princeton students. At a predetermined time, the viewer attempted to "tune in" to the target and describe their location. The researchers chose distinctive visual features such as churches, harbors, airports, and markets. Distance was no obstacle. According to Russell, in this game of psychic hide-and-seek the viewers he worked with produced photographic quality drawings of the location a quarter of the time, and the best viewers were judged to be successful in three-quarters of their attempts. The Princeton experiments published in the IEEE produced data with odds of greater than a billion-to-one against chance expectation.

Over time, the researchers learned that a "sender" is not necessary for remote viewing to be successful. Simply assign a random number to the target, give the number to the receiver (the remote viewer), and the end results are just as good.

The data has been disputed because of the interpretive nature of comparing the viewers' impressions with the target locations. The "human factor" is a criticism leveled at other psi experiments, but the RV results impressed the CIA (motivated by the necessity of chasing Soviet programs already in existence) enough to switch the remote viewing program from experimental to operational. Here's where the criticism that cast a "pseudoscience" shadow over remote viewing as a science starts to smell stale. Disputes can always be made about this kind of data, but the

operational successes tell a compelling story. Let's go over some that are declassified and decide for ourselves if it's believable:

Case #1: The rough details of this operation are confirmed in a memoir written by Jimmy Carter,[131] where he recounts being told by the CIA in 1979 that a plane carrying secret Russian documents crashed in remote Zaire, now known as Congo, and US intelligence assets were unable to locate it. Carter writes that the services of a clairvoyant were employed, and that person, using RV, wrote down the coordinates and a description of the terrain. Several days later, Carter saw photographs of the crash site matching the coordinates and the viewer's description of the terrain. The secret documents were recovered.

Case #2: A remote viewer received correct impressions about the type and number of radio dishes and the minute details of the rugged mountain terrain surrounding a radio listening station in the Ural Mountains, in the former Soviet Union. Western intelligence then discovered it exactly as predicted. More of a fishing expedition than a target search, the viewer was tasked with mentally scanning the Soviet Union for an unknown radio listening post, and not only found one but gave its exact coordinates. With China as the next target, the operation repeated successfully. [132]

Case #3: After being given the coordinates of a suspected nuclear site in Russia, the viewer saw in his mind a gigantic crane with eight large wheels, two on each of four legs, going back and forth on tracks, later confirmed to be a gantry crane.[133] In a follow-up session, he saw a cluster of compressed gas cylinders, a detail confirmed by satellite photos. The viewer sent his mind into the facility and saw workers assembling a metal sphere which he estimated to be sixty feet in diameter. He sensed that the trouble the workers were having welding together the sphere like sections of an orange was because the metal was warping from the high temperature of the welding material. His estimate was later learned to be two feet off from the sphere's actual fifty-eight-foot diameter, and his drawings reproduced the scene with photographic accuracy.

Case #4: In 1979, US spy satellites spotted heavy construction equipment near a lake in northern Russia. The National Security Council wanted information and

tasked a remote viewer. The viewer sensed a cold location near a body of water and a landscape dotted with large buildings and smokestacks. Sending his mind inside the target building, he witnessed construction activity on a submarine with a long, flat deck and an estimated eighteen to twenty slanted missile tubes. Oddly, the submarine was being constructed by welding it together as two halves split down the middle.

But wait, that's not how submarines were built at the time. Plus, not only would the size reported by the viewer make the sub the largest ever built, but the building housing it had no direct access to the sea. When confronted with the disparity, the viewer, now known through declassified documents to be retired Army officer Joe McMoneagle, spontaneously saw ahead in time and told the Admiral questioning him that in four months the Russians would blast a channel to connect the building to the sea and launch the sub. And that's exactly what happened. And it's one of the reasons why the military showered Joe with twenty-eight awards and decorations including the Legion of Merit for using remote viewing in support of intelligence gathering. *No way* would that happen if the supporting evidence weren't true. The military doesn't hand out its top awards based on wishful thinking.

As impossible as it sounds, it all happened, and it's a tiny sampling of the data. Some of the most successful operations are still classified, too, but one that can be talked about without concern for leaking secrets happened when remote viewer Pat Price, a retired police officer, psychically identified the ringleader of the gang that kidnapped Patty Hearst from her Berkeley, California, apartment in 1974. Here's Russell Targ's account of it:

At the Berkeley police station, I stood with psychic policeman Pat Price as he put his finger on the face of a man his ESP chose as Hearst's kidnapper. He did this from a police loose-leaf mug book of hundreds of photos. He then told the police where to find the kidnap car. When the kidnapper and the car were confirmed the following day, I knew I had just seen a "miracle."[134]

To say that Price's spontaneous demonstration of psychic ability was merely a coincidence really stretches plausibility. It wasn't performed under controlled conditions, but it's also true that these abilities show up more often when driven by

necessity or circumstance, which are hard variables to control for. However, researchers have confirmed that their lab experiments at remote viewing and other forms of psi functioning produce better results when the stakes are higher, like when searching for the target of a kidnapping, or performing a task for a case officer whose thumbs up or down determines if further funding is provided for research. Conversely, scores are lower when it's just another day of looking at vanilla targets or card guessing in the lab. Motivation is essential. Raising energy is essential, a marker to look for rooted in established science, and you'll learn why in a moment.

Two of the world's premier scientific organizations, SRI and Science Applications International Corporation, led the RV programs under code names such as Grill Flame and Star Gate. During the twenty-two-year run of official activity, not only the CIA but also DIA, NSA, NASA, Army and Air Force Intelligence, and the National Security Council got involved. The CIA alone spent more than $20 million on funding. The programs went through rigorous yearly reviews, and in the end the CIA said the results were inconclusive and that remote viewing was not reliable as an intelligence-gathering method.

Can you feel the air draining out of the room?

An official confirmation from the organization whose mission is to deal with cold, hard reality would be a turning point. It might lend credibility to other areas of parapsychological research. Instead, the biggest impression in the mind of the public about remote viewing came from the movie *The Men Who Stare at Goats*. Decades later, the CIA acknowledged that RV produced actionable intelligence, but after the program officially ended in the mid-1990s, the agency said, basically, "Go home folks; nothing to see here." Surprise, surprise.

Was it a cover-up by intelligence agencies that didn't want to tip-off rivals such as Russia and China that the US had developed a psychic spying program from which nothing can be hidden? This author reviewed numerous books and dozens of hours' worth of video interviews with people involved in the RV programs, and read the papers, including one showing effect sizes *four standard deviations* from chance expectation.[135] It may not mean much to the layperson, but to a research scientist it's enough proof to say, in their best Mr. Spock voice, "veeery interesting." With all the remote viewing experiments taken together, the odds of producing such specific and accurate information by chance are a trillion to one, according to Dr. Targ. It

seems in this case that the science of the paranormal has given us both data and individual cases that are indisputable. Remote viewing is a real paranormal phenomenon with a real science behind it, and even though the intelligence programs officially ended decades ago, they almost certainly continue under even deeper layers of secrecy.

Jessica Utts, a professor of statistics at UC Irvine, reviewed the data as part of a blue-ribbon panel of scientists and did it with all the rigor you'd expect from a statistician and former university department head, and she says:

Using the standards applied to any other area of science, it is concluded that psychic functioning has been well established. The statistical results of the studies examined are far beyond what is expected by chance. Arguments that these results could be due to methodological flaws in the experiments are soundly refuted.[136]

But Ray Hyman, the professor of psychology at the University of Oregon whose experience as a palm reader made him skeptical of any research that requires human interpretation, counters that psychic functioning is not scientifically established, but concedes that the effect sizes are too large to dismiss as statistical flukes.[137] His statement at least leaves open the door to the possibility it's real. The blue-ribbon panel concluded in the report's executive summary:

Evidence has not been provided that clearly demonstrates that the **causes** of hits are due to the operation of paranormal phenomena; the laboratory experiments have not identified the origins or nature of the remote viewing phenomenon, if, indeed, it exists at all.[138]

Indeed. The sticking point is the word in bold: causes. Even skeptics admit that the data clearly show the effects, and they're anomalous, but to say it's paranormal or ESP or psychic is too big of a leap.

That report came out in 1995, and if it were the final word, the claim that RV is *the* proof in the pudding would fall short. But since then, the declassification of reams of documents and the publication of numerous books from major players involved in the program(s) (and the release of a documentary movie, *Third Eye Spies*) leave no doubt. We're not talking about a mere statistical anomaly—RV is a

protocol for tapping into psychic functioning, and whether or not it's ever proven to the satisfaction of the scientific establishment, the people involved have no doubt. They were there, after all. The dry write-ups in research papers offered after the fact will never come close to capturing what happened in those laboratories and operations centers.

Seeing Through Walls

So how does RV work? If we're to help the scientific community catch up, we need to offer solid and testable theories about the elusive causes the blue-ribbon panel demanded to know, and the thirty-five years of research by physicist Dr. Ed May, a former RV program director, offers one. It's firmly rooted in physical science, and it begins with the fact that changes in the target's entropy are linked to the cause we're looking for. Changes make the target more dynamic and readable by the "sixth sense" built into the body, that works similarly to other biological sensory systems' sensitivity to change. The effect showed up in Daryl Bem's precognition research, too, and the strongest RV performances were scored on targets such as rocket launches, particle accelerators, and nuclear explosions, involving large and sudden changes in entropy. In fact, one of the biggest operational successes in remote viewing's history involved detecting a secret Chinese nuclear test three days before it happened. Entropic change could be behind why David Booth dreamed ten nights in a row about a plane crash, a big, sudden event that then happened, and why strong emotions and powerful world events register in REG experiments. Sudden changes in the strength of the sensory input signal, not the strength of the signal itself, register on this overlooked sense, which is arguably what happened when research subjects in Bem's experiments saw spicy pictures. Entropic change is the path to follow into the physical sciences to find the causes, especially the gradient of Shannon entropy to its target, a measure of information in a system; Ed May's experiments found a strong correlation with RV successes.

From there, it doesn't take long to arrive at testable theories that join up at the crossroads of energy and the systems and organs of the body sensitive to it. And that leads us to the myriad of practices and systems that fall under the umbrella of "energy work." Yoga, one of the most ancient practices of moving energy in the body, includes a manual describing thirty-two paranormal abilities like precognition

and telepathy as side effects of the practice. Kundalini is an energy associated with the spine interrelated with mystical powers of mind and body for advanced practitioners. Qigong and its related martial art, Tai Chi, not only teach how to work with energy, but skilled practitioners perform strongly in tests of distant mental influence, a close cousin of remote viewing in parapsychology. Tummo, taught by Tibetan Buddhism, is proven to give practitioners control of their body temperature. Again, the change in entropy, the amount of energy available for work, is key, and it doesn't take a genius to make testable predictions. For example, energy workers will score higher than your average Joe and will exhibit big changes in entropy in areas of their body associated with their work.

And it's already been shown that artists and musicians score higher on tests of this perceptual ability because they are more skilled at right-brain processes. Scientists and engineers, on the other hand, are stronger at left-brain processes. That emphasis may increase their brain's inhibition of anomalous cognition. It's no wonder, then, that the biggest blind spot is found among the very people asked to explain these phenomena.

I think we're seeing the problem here.

Interestingly, we could test for another correlation based on the fact that the Scientology practice of "clearing" is cited by Pat Price, Hal Puthoff, Ingo Swann, and others as an enhancer of the perceptual ability of remote viewing. Clearing frees a person from the influence of painful memories stored in the reactive mind, a form of psychic disorder. Order, on the other hand, decreases entropy, and order in human systems goes hand in hand with the ability to focus. Focus is an expenditure of energy that when put to work reduces disorder. The energy expended on clearing negative influences reduces disorder in the mind of the human being. The hypothesis we can make and test is that a person's state of mind, how clear or unclear it is, will determine the quality of the results produced when attempting to use anomalous cognition. This is clearly the case, as seen in the fact that people who regularly practice meditation score better pretty much across the board in psi testing. Also, Bob Monroe's techniques for focusing attention on inner states and his audio technology for synchronizing the hemispheres of the brain worked exceptionally well for remote viewers like Joe McMoneagle. Producing order in the mind and body makes more energy available for work, such as the work of focusing on a

target while remote viewing.

This line of thought leads us back to Russell Targ, the former RV program director, because his theories about how RV works focus on the mind. Russell's theory could be summarized as: less mental noise (disorder) in the mind of the viewer equates to greater quality of their perceptions. But for Russell, the underlying cause of the effect is in the mind's relationship to the larger systems with which it interacts. He is a firm supporter of the concept of nonlocal mind, meaning that the mind is not localized in the human body, it is interconnected with time and space through the principles of nonlocality and entanglement. The mind that can excel at remote viewing is one that's open and expansive and free from noise and distraction. Russell calls it "unobstructed awareness," and you don't have to tape ping-pong balls over your eyes like in the ganzfeld experiments to shut out distractions. Russell says all the instruction you need is found easily in the Buddhist and other doctrines that teach meditation.

In that sense, remote viewing is less a skill or ability and more a natural quality of the clear mind's relationship with the larger world, which the remote viewer knows to be much more expansive than the point of view where most people sit not knowing that they are plugged directly into the cosmos. The ultimate mind-bender about remote viewing may be that the viewer probably isn't actually sending their mind to the target location; they are finding the target location *within* their own mind.

Like with Dean Jahns and Carl Jung and Wolfgang Pauli, this view of how psi functioning works boils down to oneness as an inherent quality of all life *and* matter in the universe. Here on the surface everything looks separate, but down below it's all interconnected. Who knows how to test such an idea, but it's an idea that's persisted for a long time and is at the core of many philosophies. And there's math to back it that we don't need to get into right now.

Fundamentally these are human questions as much as science questions, and it leads to more interesting research findings related to the humans tested for RV ability in our search to know the elusive **causes** that the mainstream scientific community is demanding before it will countenance the idea that the evidence—very strong, in some cases—is anything more than a fluke: People with prior psychic functioning experiences score significantly higher during testing than those

who have not had psi experiences.[139] It gives us good reason to think that the human factor must be accounted for, because belief is a driving force behind the science of the paranormal.

To Believe or Not Believe

When it comes to human performance, the belief that something *can* happen makes it more likely *to* happen, like when we believed we could go to the Moon and made it happen. Conversely, taking the Pauli Effect into consideration (an anomaly where the presence of someone like Wolfgang Pauli with strong beliefs and opinions can mess up science experiments), the belief that something *can't* happen makes it less likely. And if that belief is felt strongly by the journal editor or department head or program manager calling the shots, it raises the possibility that the gatekeepers in science, generally the most rational in their field, may put out a vibe that cancels out ESP, like William H. Macy's character in the movie *The Cooler,* who could walk onto a casino floor and end a hot streak. Because of Pauli, we know it can be done when people like him walk into a lab.

It's not enough to believe that certain psychic functioning is possible. A majority of people think so, according to surveys—but do *you* think so? You, the person being tested or trying to find out on your own. The data say yes, belief is a big (or even the biggest) factor—we need only look at the placebo effect and psychosomatic illness for examples of belief affecting outcomes in dramatic ways. And let's not forget the nocebo effect, where belief is believed to be responsible for negative outcomes.

Take spoon bending, for example. Scientist Dean Radin and radio host Wendy Garrett are "believers"—Radin's experiments have proven the existence of certain psychic functioning beyond any doubt, statistically speaking, and Garrett is a gifted psychic and radio broadcaster who has interviewed hundreds of guests about their paranormal experiences and spoken extensively about her own. Neither of them have an issue with the existence of the psychokinetic power to bend metal, despite the Amazing Randi's insistence that it's a cheap trick. But put a spoon into the hands of Dean or Wendy and ask them to bend it using only the power of their mind. Make it happen. Use their force of will. Summon up their chi energy and channel it into the spoon. Just make the darn thing bend!

Both of them said the spoon they were holding did nothing at first. In the immortal words of Nelson from *The Simpsons*: "Ha-ha!"

But then something really interesting happened. They saw other people bend spoons right before their eyes. Then, when the group focused on them, they held a spoon, followed the instructions, and voila! The metal went soft, easily bending in ways that would be hard to do even with tools such as pliers and wrenches. It's hard to believe unless you see it for yourself, and since seeing is believing, it overcomes that obstacle.

It wasn't a cheap trick, but there is a trick to it that leads us to the next elusive cause: emotion. Radin and Garrett got caught up in the moment and felt the group's energy, a strongly positive energy that put them into an altered state of consciousness. Under those special conditions, the metal bent before their eyes. Along with professors Brian Josephson and Ed Kelly, eminent scientists like physicists David Bohm and John Hasted credited witnessing spoon bending for igniting their interest in paranormal phenomena. Dean and Wendy did it personally, so for them PK is no longer a belief, it's a known. You can't make yourself believe; you have to know it if you want to do it personally.

But could Wendy or Dean do it with an uber skeptic bearing down on them? It's a hazardous proposition for even the most talented spoon bender. Uri Geller bombed when he tried to demonstrate PK under the trained eye of Johnny Carson, a former stage magician. Sometimes the feeling is not only not right, it's wrong.

Sensitivity is a key quality in people who demonstrate aptitude at psychic functioning.

People who score highly on measures of emotional intelligence are more likely to succeed in remote viewing trails.[140] Emotional intelligence is an ability to manage one's emotions and sense and respond to emotional signals from others. It's not a skill, it's a type of cognitive functioning.[141] Zero in on what makes emotional intelligence important in the scheme of things and it boils down to sensitivity. The same quality that makes a person sensitive to emotional signals also makes them sensitive to signals from a target they are trying to view remotely. Psychics are often said to be sensitive, and this is what it means.

Much to the disappointment of classical science, we're not talking about a signal in the sense of a cell phone signal. Instead, we're talking about signals in the sense

of knowing what someone close to you is thinking and feeling without outward indicators.

Take the card game Bridge, for example, and the fact that the best players pick up signals from their partners that inform them how to play their hands. You could argue that subtle giveaways such as micro expressions signal a partner about the strength of their hand, but those same signals could and would be picked up by their opponents. So we're not talking about a tell or a vibe. It's a signal that's more like a stimulus containing information, similar to the way that emotional signals contain meaning. Emotional signals are carriers of information, and it gives us a tantalizing glimpse into what may very well be the **cause** behind how RV operates.

A remote viewer begins with a blank slate—literally, a blank piece of paper—then, like an antenna picking up a signal, they search their mind for impressions related to the target. The signal is obscured by the noise of the viewer's regular thought processes and the distractions in their physical environment, reminding us of what Elizabeth Mayer said about seeing the outline of the ocean on a world map and how focusing on one makes the other recede. The everyday world stimulates left-brain rational thought processes. Those are the foreground. In the background are the right-brain intuitive processes. After locking onto those, the viewer can receive finer impressions, eventually producing an accurate description of the target, if all goes well.

Interestingly, a remote viewer may become aware that people at the target site are also *aware of them*, suggesting that the exchange of information is a two-way street, and sounding a lot like how Bridge partners work in tandem. The reports found deep in the remote viewing operations archives go further by saying that the viewer and people at the target communicated telepathically. It really stretches the imagination, but it gets more mysterious. In one session, a viewer successfully gained strong impressions of the target including details that matched perfectly with the site's layout from decades prior, suggesting that information may be exchanged not only across vast distances of space between viewer and target, but also distances of time.

Sensitivity tied to emotional intelligence is the viewer's internal antenna for picking up the signals, but what about the mechanism behind the exchange—can we find a cause? Physicists like Russell Targ and Ed May, with close to a century's

worth of experience with remote viewing combined, offer quantum nonlocality as the most likely cause. It allows for distant connection between two or more "entangled" objects, in this case the viewer and their target. The connection is through meaning, a felt sense of purpose and motivation, and the state of one's being, and that leads us to another avenue to explore because dreams are masters at communicating such meaning.

While dreaming, a reciprocal exchange of information is carried out between the ego and the unconscious mind, and meaning is its currency.[142] The interplay spawns dream symbols that are packed with information in the same way that a picture says a thousand words, and emotions are the signal to follow through a dream's narrative. A remote viewing target offers up information and the process proceeds in much the same way. For example, a viewer could see a building and immediately start sensing its purpose and emotional atmosphere. All the information is there at a glance.

The viewer and the target are in a reciprocal relationship that is anything but detached and objective, which is also how it works while dreaming. It's close, personal, even like there's no real separation. Oneness. The viewer's relationship with the target is more like the interconnections of an entangled quantum system. In remote viewing the connection is subconscious and the exchange of information is through meaning. The exchange is too similar in both dreaming and psi for them to be unrelated.

Personal meaning appears to be the connective tissue between a person's consciousness and their reality, and reality appears to be responsive to the meaning a person creates through their perceptions and beliefs. Reality may even conform itself to reinforce those perceptions and beliefs whether or not they are objectively true. That's what the study of psi has taught us.

All the world's a stage, and the story we are telling on it evolves moment by moment like a dream.

"Bohmian mechanics," named after David Bohm's solution for the mechanism behind quantum entanglement, proposes that the information exchange between entangled objects is through a pilot wave that operates as the wave function in the mathematics of quantum theory, except it's an actual subatomic wave resembling a ripple spreading out in all directions. In a way, reminiscent of how any part of a

hologram carries information sufficient to reproduce the whole image, a pilot wave carries information for everything it's entangled with, and it spans the entire quantum system, theoretically the entire universe.

Bohm's pilot wave acts like a carrier signal, also called a carrier wave as used in radio and cell phone transmission. A carrier signal broadcasts steadily but doesn't carry much information. The bulk of it transmits via a secondary signal imposed over the carrier, allowing for voice, music, and data to travel long distances the most efficiently. In theory, Bohm's pilot wave is the carrier signal that communicates the gestalt or "big picture" of the target, and the bulk of the information that a remote viewer receives is communicated by the secondary signal that travels with it. The secondary signal is *meaningful*.

A remote viewer locks onto a signal and decodes its information through their consciousness. Is it the same kind of signal-based information transfer as Bohm's pilot wave? Somebody should find out. It would answer a great mystery not only in quantum physics but also in psi functioning, and finally prove causation in a way that establishment science can and must accept.

But to make that leap we must first account for consciousness as a central actor in cause-and-effect relationships, and penetrate further to see that everything we observe, and even consciousness itself, operates within larger structures that may be universal in scale. Material science excels at isolating effects to study them, but its tools and framework for studying effects embedded within systems of such complexity are meager. It means we need a science of consciousness, and fortunately one of the star players in the remote viewing program pointed us in the right direction before he left this world.

Ingo's Final Message

Refuse to play along with the pseudoscientific skepticism that obscures reality. That's how we take up the challenge laid down by Ingo Swann, the psychic who created, developed, and taught the remote viewing protocol and demonstrated it many times in many places and to many people whose reputations and careers and lives depended on operating firmly in reality. During his keynote address at the 2006 International Remote Viewing Association Conference, several years before he died, he challenged the audience to find the flaw in the definition of

parapsychology. He read to the audience, predicting that they wouldn't catch on until he pointed it out:

Parapsychology is a modern, more restricted form of psychical research. The field which uses the scientific method to investigate phenomena for which there appears to be no normal sensory explanations.

This author admits to not finding the flaw. It's so taken for granted, no one questions it. Ingo then asked what the scientific method is based on. Like school children, members of the audience recited what they'd learned from textbooks, repeating from memory its steps, processes, and underlying assumptions, thereby driving home his point about something so taken for granted, it's never questioned. The scientific method is the flaw, and the reason is because it's based on materialism.

Ingo then quotes Merriam-Webster's definition of scientific materialism:

The theory that physical matter is the *only or fundamental reality*, and that all being and processes and phenomena can be explained as the manifestations and results of *matter*. [Emphasis added]

Get it now? If science thinks that matter is the only reality, then anything not made of matter cannot be studied by the scientific method.

Studying paranormal and psychic phenomena associated with the mind and the humans who use it, as parapsychology does, is fundamentally flawed. You don't use a microscope to study the stars, and you don't use the scientific method to study phenomena associated with *consciousness*. Ingo says if you can't explain consciousness, you can't explain anything that falls under the umbrella of parapsychology. Consciousness is not quantifiable, and he cites physicist Sir Roger Penrose, winner of the 2020 Nobel Prize in Physics, as the biggest name in the scientific establishment pointing out that fact.

We need a science of consciousness that doesn't begin with the assumption that matter is all there is. That's Ingo's final message. And that's the challenge. Do we grab our light sabers and face it?

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